★ CHAMPIONS LEAGUE SPECIAL ★

World Soccer®

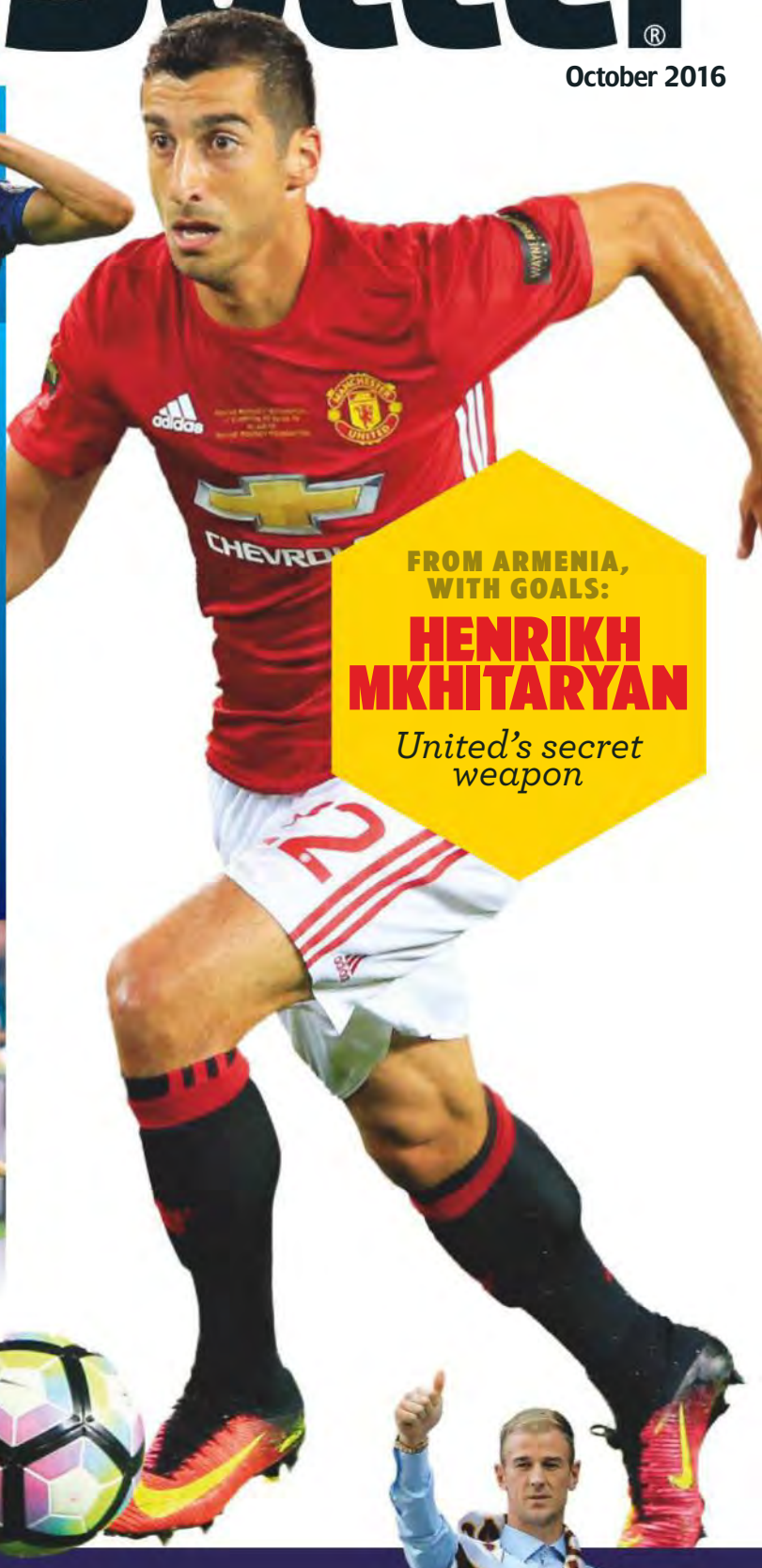
GLOBAL FOOTBALL SINCE 1960

October 2016

ULTIMATE GUIDE

CHAMPIONS LEAGUE

- ✓ EVERY PLAYER
- ✓ EVERY TEAM
- ✓ YOUR EXPERT PREVIEW



FROM ARMENIA, WITH GOALS:

HENRIKH MKHITARYAN

United's secret weapon

EUROPA LEAGUE

All 48 teams analysed: Tactics & key players

NEYMAR'S TRIUMPH

How Brazil struck gold

PLUS **SUMMER TRANSFERS:** ALL THE MAJOR MOVES

Art-of-football.com

For the moments
that
last
forever

WorldSoccer
Global football intelligence since 1960

Contents

CHAMPIONS LEAGUE 2016/17 GUIDE

49 Fixtures, players, team guide

54 Arsenal
60 Atletico Madrid
58 Barcelona
55 Basle
62 Bayer Leverkusen
60 Bayern Munich
56 Benfica
57 Besiktas
64 Bor Dortmund
59 Bor M'gladbach
59 Celtic
67 Club Brugge
67 Copenhagen
62 CSKA Moscow
69 Dinamo Zagreb
57 Dynamo Kiev
68 Juventus
66 Leicester City
65 Legia Warsaw
55 Ludogorets
69 Lyon
58 Manchester City
63 Monaco
56 Napoli
54 PSG
66 Porto
61 PSV
64 Real Madrid
61 Rostov
68 Sevilla
65 Sporting
53 Tottenham H

Plus
70 Europa League preview

FEATURE

PLAYER BIOGRAPHY
42 Henrikh Mkhitaryan

Follow World Soccer online
FOOTBALL 24-7

Follow @worldsoccermag Like World Soccer Magazine

THE WORLD THIS MONTH

People in the news...on and off the pitch

4 In pictures
10 From the Editor
14 Joao Havelange (1916-2016)
16 UEFA Super Cup
17 Neymar
18 **Paul Gardner** the age cheats
20 **Keir Radnedge** UEFA election
22 **Ins & outs** people on the move
24 **Transfers** the summer's big deals
26 **Brian Glanville** FIFA's immoral master

EYEWITNESS
30 Olympic Games

WOMEN'S FOOTBALL
36 Germany win gold in Rio

TACTICS
40 Man City: the Pep effect

ARCHIVES
86 October 1968

FACE TO FACE
88 Cristiano Ronaldo

THE GREAT MATCHES
98 Manchester United v Bayern Munich, 1999

24

30

88

World Service

Exclusive reports from our worldwide network of correspondents

93

93 **Egypt** Al Ahly exit Champions League

94 **Japan** new investment in the J.League

SAVE MONEY ON WorldSoccer
Exclusive subscription offer.
See page 8

PLUS 92 Global diary 96 Results, tables, fixtures

In Pictures

The global game caught on camera

BRAZIL...Brazil players celebrate winning the Olympic gold medal thanks to Neymar's penalty in the shoot-out against Germany in the Final at Maracana

SPAIN... Atletico Madrid's Yannick Ferreira Carrasco is squeezed out by Leganes

FRANCE...Lyon forward Maxwell Cornet reacts after missing a chance in the Ligue 1 game away to Dijon

ISRAEL...Beitar Jerusalem fans hold up a banner prior to their Europa League play-off game against Saint-Etienne

COLOMBIA...Independiente Medellin's Luis Arias is tackled by Gustavo Gimenez of Paraguayan side Sportivo Luqueno in the Sudamericana Cup

ARGENTINA...River Plate players ride around their Monumental stadium on a fire engine after beating Colombia's Santa Fe to win the Recopa Sudamericana

GERMANY...Bastian Schweinsteiger is thrown into the air by team-mates after his last appearance for Germany, in a 2-0 win against Finland

PICTURES OF THE MONTH QR CODE

To see more of the best photos from the month, scan the QR code using any free QR reader that can be downloaded to your smartphone. You can also see the images by logging on to http://po.st/Toekkb

Subscribe today and pay only £3.23 per issue

PRICE GUARANTEED FOR 12 MONTHS

Subscribe online at
worldsoccersubs.com/october2016

Complete the coupon opposite

THE DIRECT DEBIT GUARANTEE: This Guarantee is offered by all banks and building societies that accept instructions to pay Direct Debits · If there are any changes to the amount, date or frequency of your Direct Debit Time Inc. (UK) Ltd will notify you 10 working days in advance of your account being debited or as otherwise agreed. If you request Time Inc. (UK) Ltd to collect a payment, confirmation of the amount and date will be given to you at the time of the request. · If an error is made in the payment of your Direct Debit, by Time Inc. (UK) Ltd or your bank or building society you are entitled to a full and immediate refund of the amount paid from your bank or building society – If you receive a refund you are not entitled to, you must pay it back when Time Inc. (UK) Ltd asks you to · You can cancel a Direct Debit at any time by simply contacting your bank or building society. Written confirmation may be required. Please also notify us.

WORLD SOCCER SUBSCRIPTION OFFER

SAVE UP TO 30%

HERE'S THE DEAL:

- Pay less than at the newsagent
- 13 issues a year delivered direct to your door
- Every subscription package includes access to the iPad/iPhone version at no extra cost*
- Enjoy exclusive offers with Rewards. Visit worldsoccer.com/rewards

0330 333 1113

Quote code: **11CJ**

7 days a week from 8am to 9pm (UK time)

*The digital version comes free with the print edition of your subscription and is available strictly on a trial basis. Time Inc. UK Ltd reserve the right to withdraw free access to the digital version at any time. The Rewards scheme is available for all active print subscribers of magazines published by Time Inc. (UK) Ltd, free of charge. Digital subscribers also get access as long as the subscription has been purchased directly through the publishers at magazinesdirect.com. For full terms and conditions visit mymagazinerewards.co.uk.

ORDER FORM

Post the completed order form to:
FREEPOST Time Inc. (No further address needed. No stamp required- UK only)

YES! I would like to subscribe to **World Soccer**

☐ UK 6 monthly Direct Debit – **pay only £20.99 every 6 months, SAVING YOU 30% (full price £30.67)** — **BEST DEAL**

☐ UK 2 years cheque/credit or debit card (26 issues) – **pay only £85.49, saving 30% across the two years (full price £122.68)**

☐ UK 1 year cheque/credit or debit card (13 issues) – **pay only £45.99, saving 25% across the year (full price £61.34)**

OVERSEAS OFFERS: SAVING UP TO 35%

+44 (0)330 333 1113 quote code 11CJ
or visit **worldsoccersubs.com/october2016**
US toll free number 1888 313 5528 (lines open Mon-Fri 9am-8pm, Sat 9am-4pm EST)

YOUR DETAILS:

Mr/Mrs/Miss/Ms: Forename:
Surname:
Email:
Address:
Postcode:
Home Tel. No: (inc area code)
Mobile:
Date of Birth: D D M M Y Y Y Y

GIFT SUBSCRIPTION:

Please fill out both the recipient's details and the 'Your Details' section above

Mr/Mrs/Miss/Ms: Forename:
Surname:
Address:
Postcode:

CHOOSE FROM 3 EASY WAYS TO PAY:

1. **CHEQUE**
I enclose a cheque/postal order for: £ _____ made payable to Time Inc. (UK) Ltd.

2. **CREDIT/DEBIT CARD**
Please debit my: ☐ Amex ☐ Visa ☐ Visa Debit ☐ Mastercard
Card No.
Expiry Date M M Y Y
Signature: Date:
(I am over 18)

3. **DIRECT DEBIT:** To pay £20.99 every 6 months by UK Direct Debit, please complete your details below:

PAYMENT DETAILS – DIRECT DEBIT
Instruction to your bank or building society to pay by Direct Debit.
For office use only: Originators Reference – 764 221

Name of Bank:
Address of Bank:
Postcode:
Name of Account Holder:
Sort Code: Account No:

Instruction to your Bank or Building Society Please pay Time Inc. (UK) Ltd Direct Debits from the account detailed on this Instruction subject to the safeguards assured by the Direct Debit Guarantee. I understand that this instruction may remain with Time Inc. (UK) Ltd and if so, details will be passed electronically to my Bank or Building Society.

Signature: Date:
(I am over 18)

Pay just £20.99 payable by Direct Debit every 6 months, with the price guaranteed for the first 12 months. **Offer closes 31st October 2016.** Offer open to new subscribers only. Please allow up to six weeks for delivery of your first subscription issue (up to eight weeks overseas). The full subscription rate is for 1 year (13 issues) and includes postage and packaging. If the magazine ordered changes frequency per annum, we will honour the number of issues paid for, not the term of the subscription. For full terms and conditions, visit www.magazinesdirect.com/terms. For enquiries from the UK please call: 0330 333 4333, for overseas please call: +44 330 333 4333 (lines are open Monday- Friday, 8:30am- 5:30pm UK Time, ex. Bank Holidays) or e-mail: help@magazinesdirect.com. Calls to 0330 numbers will be charged at no more than a national landline call, and may be included in your phone providers call bundle. We will process your data in accordance with our Privacy Policy (www.timeincuk.com/privacy). By providing your information, you agree to be contacted by Time Inc. (UK) Ltd, publisher of World Soccer and other iconic media brands, with information about our goods and services and those of our carefully selected third parties. Please tick here if you do not wish to receive these messages: ☐ by email and/or SMS ☐ by post and/or telephone ☐ about carefully selected third party goods and services.

XWS code 11CJ

FROM THE EDITOR

This month's cover star, Henrikh Mkhitaryan, is the sort of player whose talents demand respect and appreciation. Yet his arrival at Manchester United has been overlooked in the scramble to praise the high-profile signings of Paul Pogba and Zlatan Ibrahimovic.

Despite their record-breaking transfer activity, United are absent from this season's Champions League, though the club's bean-counters can take solace from the fact that every Premier League side will receive more in prize money and TV revenue than the team that lifts the European Cup at Cardiff's Millennium Stadium on June 3.

> Every Premier League side will receive more in prize money and TV revenue than the team that lifts the European Cup

With debuts for Leicester City and Rostov of Russia, there is plenty of new interest in this season's competition. Once again, our guide to all 32 teams in the group stage (page 49) draws on the expertise of our correspondents around the continent. Similarly, with the 48 participants in the Europa League, and I would welcome your views on our previews.

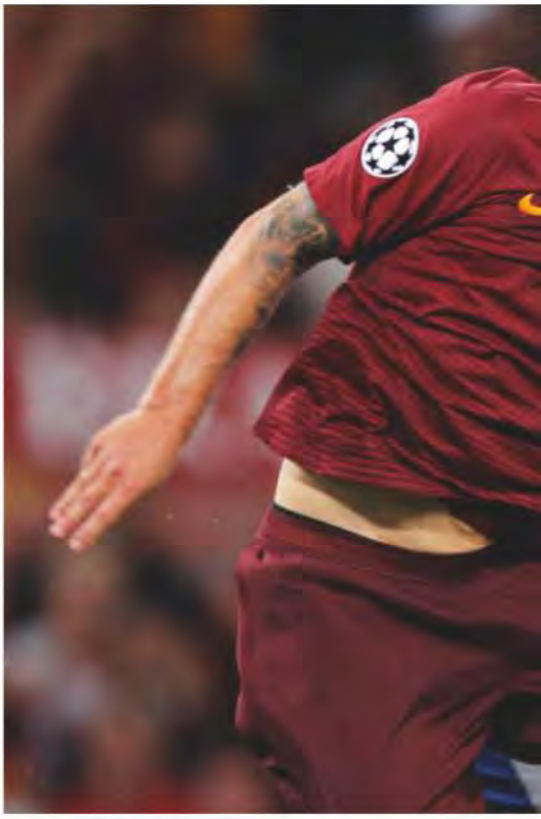
It's remarkable that no team has retained the European Cup since Milan in 1990. Real Madrid may change that this season, though there are a number of stronger but familiar contenders.

Gavin Hamilton, Editor

10 SIGNIFICANT EVENTS THIS MONTH

1. UEFA announce changes to the Champions League format ..... page 10
2. Joao Havelange dies, aged 100 ..... page 14
3. Brazil win their first Olympic gold ..... page 30
4. Real Madrid win the UEFA Super Cup ..... page 16
5. English clubs spend a record amount in the summer transfer window ..... page 24
6. Manchester United break the world transfer record to sign Paul Pogba ..... page 24
7. Robbie Keane retires from international football ..... page 23
8. Internazionale appoint Frank De Boer ..... page 22
9. Rostov make their debut in the Champions League ..... page 49
10. Germany's women win their first Olympic gold ..... page 36

Third...an extra place would have helped Roma



MONTE CARLO

UEFA sees off breakaway threat with Champions League changes

The top four European leagues will each be guaranteed four places in the group stage of the Champions League from the 2018–19 season under new proposals from UEFA.

Under the present system, the top three leagues – currently Spain, Germany and England – have three places each, while their fourth-placed teams must play off over two legs for a place in the group phase.

The fourth-ranked league, currently Italy, has only two guaranteed places plus one in the play-off round.

The changes came after Europe's top clubs once again discussed the possibility of forming a breakaway "Super League".

While 16 teams from the top four leagues will be guaranteed places in the group stage, another

"In the way it was done, it's a scandal"

Bernard Caiazzo, Saint-Etienne co-president, on four Champions League places being awarded to La Liga, Bundesliga, Premier League and Serie A

eight places will go to teams from leagues ranked fifth to 10th. Only six teams will now come through the play-offs.

There will no longer be automatic places for the champions of leagues ranked 11th and 12th by UEFA – Switzerland and Turkey in this season's competition

UEFA also announced changes to the way that revenue is allocated to participating clubs. The TV "market pool" will be reduced to 15 per cent of prize money – down from 40 per cent – with 30 per cent now awarded based on a revised club co-efficient, where bonus points will be awarded for their "historical success" in past tournaments.

UEFA plans to establish a new subsidiary company, UEFA Club Competitions SA, which will "play a strategic role in determining the future and the management of club competitions". Half of the group's managing directors will be appointed by the European Club Association (ECA), a further sop to the interests of Europe's biggest clubs.

The changes were agreed by the UEFA Executive Committee, meeting in Monaco ahead of the Champions League draw, even though the European governing body has been without a president since the departure of Michel Platini last autumn.

Gavin Hamilton

HEROES & VILLAINS

Real hero...goalscoring defender Sergio Ramos

SERGIO RAMOS

The Real Madrid centre-back has now scored in his last three Finals, finding the net against San Lorenzo in the 2014 Club World Cup, Atletico Madrid in this year's Champions League showdown and Sevilla in the UEFA Super Cup.

LAS PALMAS

The Spanish side won their first two games of the season to go top of the table when La Liga broke for the international weekend. It was the first time they had been there for 38 years.

NEYMAR

The Barcelona forward scored the winning penalty to seal Brazil's Olympic triumph.

ZLATAN IBRAHIMOVIC

Found the net for Manchester United against Bournemouth to extend his record of scoring on his debut in the Champions League, Serie A, La Liga, Ligue 1 and now the Premier League.

Dream start...Zlatan Ibrahimovic scored at Bournemouth

JASPER CILLESSEN

Farewell...Jasper Cillessen let in four

Conceded four times for the first time in five years as an Ajax keeper – in what proved to be his final appearance before a move to Barcelona. Russian side Rostov scored the goals in a 32-minute spell, which earned them a place in the Champions League group stage for the first time.

Happier...better behaved Sporting Gijon supporters

SPORTING GIJON FANS

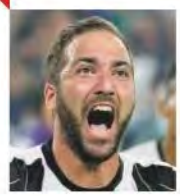
The club's home game against Athletic Bilbao was suspended for a minute by referee Clos Gomez after supporters targeted the visitors' Inaki Williams with racist abuse.

JOSE BAXTER

The former Everton and Sheffield United midfielder will miss the entire 2016-17 season after being banned for 12 months for failing a drug test for a second time. The 24-year-old is believed to have tested positive for cocaine in February, having previously tested positive for ecstasy in 2015.

ALBANIA

The Football Association of Albania was fined and sanctioned for fielding an ineligible player in a friendly against Luxembourg in March. Albania forfeited the game 3-0 after it was discovered that Ergys Kace played when he should have been serving a one-match suspension.



"Keep saying I'm fat, I'll continue to score goals"

Juventus record signing Gonzalo Higuain hits back at critics who claimed he arrived in Turin in bad shape

GOALS we'd like to see again

To see video footage of these goals, and many more that we have selected, scan the QR code using any free QR reader that can be downloaded to your smartphone. You can also see the videos by logging on to http://po.st/nV2ZPI

1

1 LUIS SUAREZ
Barcelona v Real Betis
A fine counter-attack sees an unselfish Lionel Messi set up a tap-in for the Uruguayan.

2 EDUARDO HERRERA
Pumas v Honduras Progreso
A spectacular overhead kick, from just inside the penalty area, in the CONCACAF Champions League.

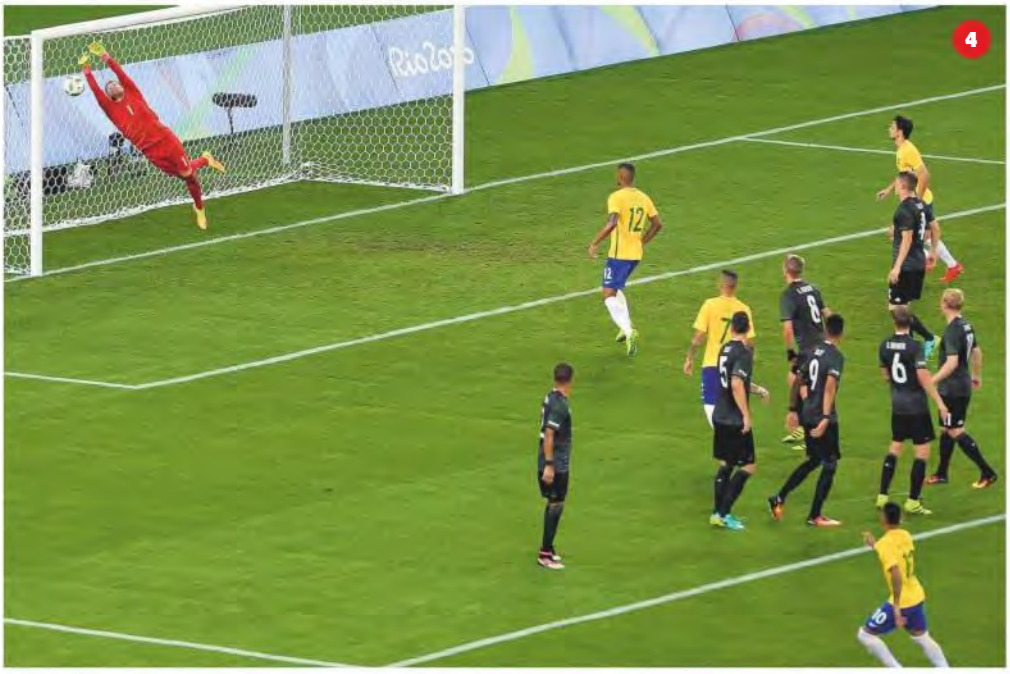
3 FABIAN ORELLANA
Celta Vigo v Real Madrid
Good team build-up is finished by a stunning strike in top corner.

4 NEYMAR
Brazil v Germany
The Brazil captain curls a free-kick in off the bar in the men's Olympic football Final.

2

5 LUKASZ TEODORCZYK
Anderlecht v Gent
Great individual skill to beat two defenders before drilling a low shot into the far corner.

6 JEAN
Palmeiras v Fluminense
A volley from just outside the penalty area, following a goalmouth scramble, to maintain Palmeiras' position at the top of the league.



4

WINNERS

ASTRA GIURGIU
The Romanians dumped West Ham United out of the Europa League before the group stage for a second consecutive season.

PARIS SAINT-GERMAIN
Victory in the French Super Cup was their ninth successive win in a Final since losing the 2011 French Cup to Lille.

PORTO
Beat Roma to book a place in the Champions League group stage for a record-equalling 21st time, matching Real Madrid and Barcelona.

LEICESTER CITY
The first English champions to lose on the first day of the defence of their title since Arsenal in 1989.

USA WOMEN
Exited the tournament in Rio on penalties in bitterness and showed no sign of the Olympic spirit.

MARTIN JOL
Quit Al Ahly over safety fears following death threats from fans after the Egyptian side failed to reach the semi-finals of the African Champions League.

LOSERS

"We need to not be Messi-dependent. Yes, he is our MVP, but the rest of the team has to give us more depth as well"

New Argentina coach Edgardo Bauza

Notebook

Highlights from some of our regular on-line contributions

SOUTH AMERICA

Edgardo Bauza bowed to the inevitable when he named his [first] Argentina squad. The headlines all went to the inclusion of Lionel Messi, swiftly going back on his decision to retire from international football.

Messi's rethink is almost certainly, in part at least, a recognition of contemporary reality. After his disappointment in 1966, Pele said he would not play in another World Cup – and he only returned to the Brazil side two years later, on the way to book end his top-level career in magnificent style in Mexico 70.

Assuming that he wants to do something similar in Russia 2018, Messi does not have the same luxury. The longer he stays out, the harder it would be for Argentina to qualify; when he missed the first four rounds of the current campaign with injury, Argentina struggled badly without him.

Messi's inclusion aside, the main talking point in Bauza's squad is that it is almost exactly the same as that of his predecessor Gerardo Martino. Some fringe players have been changed, but the core of the group is exactly the same – a recognition that there is no time available for a major overhaul.

Tim Vickery

No change...Edgardo Bauza

Goal...Sevilla's Franco Vazquez

SPAIN

So just the 40, then. Spanish football returned with goals – and lots and lots of them.

There were 10 in Seville, eight in Barcelona, six in Valencia, and an average of four per game all over the country.

Nowhere was there a goalless game, and even the lowest scoring of matches was historic. Leganes, down in Spain's rationalised, 80-team, four-grouped Second Division B just three years ago, marked their first-ever game in Primera with a 1-0 win at Celta Vigo.

That wrapped up a huge weekend for the three new arrivals: all the promoted clubs had taken at least a point on the opening weekend.

Sid Lowe

GERMANY

Bundestrainer Joachim Low called it a "practice match for Bayern" and it was exactly that, the champions effortlessly crushing Bremen 6-0 in the season opener at the Allianz-Arena.

It was a perfect start for new Bayern coach Carlo Ancelotti.

As for poor Bremen, they were never at the races, nervous, careless, disorganised and totally devoid of physicality and belief. On the face of it, only a top-flight team in the loosest sense of the word.

Nick Bidwell

Weekly notes from Brazil, Spain, Germany and Italy at **worldsoccer.com**

ITALY

On paper, at least, Juventus look by far the strongest side in the land, one that has put together a war treasury with which to battle for the Champions League.

With Paulo Dybala to partner Gonzalo Higuain in a mouth-watering, all-Argentinian attack, with Dani Alves offering offensive bite to the defence, Miralem Pjaca promising youthful energy on the flank, and Medhi Benatia adding hardly needed solidity to the defence, Juve looks like a serious number.

It remains to be seen if they are good enough to survive the departure of Paul Pogba but, at this stage, one suspects they will be.

One man who dares to take a different view is the new Internazionale coach, Frank De Boer. Appointed at the beginning of August, just two weeks before the seasonal kick-off, the ex-Ajax player and coach told *Gazzetta Dello Sport*: "Well, we'll have to wait and see how they [Juventus] go in midfield, it's by no means sure that they will be stronger than last year.

"Yeah, they have bought big name players but we don't know yet if these big names will make into a big team."

Paddy Agnew

Opinion... Frank De Boer

"He had one idea in his head: to make football a global game with his slogan 'football is the universal language', and he succeeded"

Former FIFA president Sepp Blatter (left) on his predecessor, Joao Havelange

OBITUARY

Joao Havelange (1916-2016)

Godfather of the modern FIFA

Having read the draft of a biography about himself, Joao Havelange threw the manuscript across the table at its author. As Ernesto Rodrigues wrote in the introduction to his eventual publication: "The first person to read this was Joao Havelange. He did not like everything he read."

Arguably one of the three most influential men in modern sport, Havelange would not have liked much of what has been written since his death, from pneumonia at the age of 100, in Rio de Janeiro during the Olympic Games.

Excoriated for his ruthless pursuit of power and the maintenance of it, he was washed in opprobrium for the manner in which he and his former son-in-law – and CBF presidential successor – Ricardo Teixeira had accrued at least $20million in commissions from FIFA's long-time marketing partner ISL.

It was all perfectly simple. After the premature death of ISL's creator, Adidas scion Horst Dassler, the company needed to keep Havelange sweet to retain their contract. Sweetly rich. The commissions stream explains why IMG's efforts to win the tender were rejected despite promising to be far more rewarding. Havelange maintained that acceptance of such commissions was not against Swiss law, but that was not the point. Ethically, it was wrong as it was a gross conflict of interest.

Whether Havelange ever accepted that is unlikely. Not as thick-skinned as he is often painted, he did resign his honorary presidency of FIFA and his honorary membership of the IOC, although not before he had helped sway votes for the Rio Games bid at the decisive Copenhagen congress in 2009.

"Come to Rio in 2016 and celebrate my 100th birthday with me on Copacabana at the first Olympics in South America," he urged delegates. The twist of fate was that the Games brought not a belated birthday party - he was 100 in May – but a private family funeral.

Power...Havelange had the sporting world in his hands

> While Blatter was a prisoner of the need to keep voters onside, Havelange commanded them. He wielded an iron fist in an iron glove

All that said and acknowledged, no one did more to create the platform for the commercial explosion of sport as the world knows it today, with the exclusivity matrix of sponsorships and lucrative television rights.

The system was dreamed up for Dassler initially by British super-salesman Patrick Nally, but Havelange was the man with the power to impose it.

Jean-Marie Faustin Goedefroid de Havelange was born on May 8, 1916, of Belgian immigrants, in Brazil. At 20, he swam for Brazil at the 1936 Berlin Olympics and, to pay his sea-crossing home, he won a string of bare-knuckle boxing contests on the Hamburg docks.

He returned to the Games in London, in 1948, in the tough discipline of water polo. He was still swimming in the pool of his home or hotel every morning before breakfast well into his late 90s.

Havelange crushed one rival after another to build up a transport business and scrapped his way up the greasy pole of sporting power to become president of the old Brazilian sports confederation, the CBD. He gained power by promoting minor sports in Brazil to organise themselves into federations, who gratefully repaid his encouragement with their votes.

He became a member of the IOC in 1963 and, though not a football man, used Brazil's World Cup hat-trick in 1958, 1962 and 1970 as the platform to oust Stanley Rous as FIFA president.

Winning the FIFA presidency was just a start for Havelange. Dassler was always far more interested in sports politics than sportswear, and together with Nally he put

Funeral...Pele's floral tribute

"Havelange only [had] two ambitions left to fulfil. The first to become the first posthumous president of FIFA, the second to organise a World Cup tournament for embyros"

***World Soccer*'s Brian Glanville**

Plotting...(from left) Lennart Johansson, Sepp Blatter and Havelange

into effect a concept called, initially, Intersoccer Four. This computed the four best advertising placements around a football pitch and priced the package to sector-exclusive sponsors.

First, Nally went to Coca-Cola and used the revenue to buy back the rights to all the various FIFA and World Cup images which had been virtually given away down the years. To this day, Coca-Cola still enjoys a position of first among equals in the pantheon of FIFA sponsors.

Dassler then bought out Nally and, during the 1982 World Cup in Spain, he created a marketing agency for Havelange to use to control all FIFA's commercial activities. That agency was International Sport and Leisure (ISL).

Marrying sponsorship exclusivity with the sale of exclusive broadcast rights in a rapidly exploding television world proved a gold mine. And where FIFA led, others followed. Havelange introduced ISL to other Latin sports power-brokers, such as Juan Antonio Samaranch, who was head of the IOC, and Primo Nebiolo of the IAAF, which ran athletics.

When Havelange was elected president, FIFA had a staff of 11, all in Zurich; now it employs hundreds around the world. The World Cup, meanwhile, features twice as many teams, 32 compared with 16, as it did and is "supported" by a worldwide range of youth and women's tournaments.

Havelange commanded unprecedented power of sporting patronage on behalf not only of FIFA but in his own right. Everyone in the world game "owed" him. While his eventual successor Sepp Blatter was a prisoner of the need to keep voters onside, Havelange commanded them. He wielded an iron fist in an iron glove.

That autocratic style and opaque political and commercial agenda were not to everyone's liking, and even FIFA's official centenary history delivers a highly critical analysis of his dealings with the military dictatorship which ran Argentina at the time of the 1978 World Cup there.

Defeat was not a word which featured in the Havelange lexicon. But loyalty was. He was outraged at what he considered the political perfidy of Europe in backing South Korea against his long-favoured Japan in the duel for 2002 World Cup host.

Havelange, having been ambushed at dinner on the eve of the executive committee vote, responded with the then unique compromise proposal of a co-hosted World Cup – between two nations whose historic relationship was anything but neighbourly. But co-hosting worked, albeit at unnecessarily enormous expense, and Havelange took the credit.

By then, he was four years into presidential retirement while remaining a senior figure in the IOC.

Predators believed they saw Havelange losing his grip when he barred Pele from participation at the World Cup finals draw in Las Vegas in late 1993. The reason? Pele was involved in a battle in Brazil over TV rights with a new member of the FIFA executive committee. And that new member just happened to be Havelange's son-in-law Teixeira.

Pele was just about the only well-known soccer face in the USA and his absence from the rostrum angered and baffled organisers and officials. But Havelange, as he later told biographer Rodrigues, was merely maintaining his code of family loyalty. If that meant snubbing Pele in front of the world, well, tough.

Around this time, Blatter – infiltrated into FIFA by Dassler in 1975, a year after Havelange's initial election – began to

Far reaching... Havelange in China

entertain ideas of the presidency. A first attempt to build a voting alliance in Europe was crushed ruthlessly by Havelange. Blatter kept his job, just, but at the price of having to sack his closest aides.

Havelange stepped aside in 1998, having pulled the necessary strings to ensure that Blatter, maintaining continuity, defeated Lennart Johansson, who represented revolution. Havelange, of course, was relying on Blatter to protect his legacy.

That would have been ideal had ISL not gone bust two years later. The subsequent court case revealed not only the extent of ISL's nefarious dealings but its infamous list of beneficiaries. Havelange and Teixeira were chief among them, along with then CONMEBOL president Nicolas Leoz, CAF leader Issa Hayatou and IAAF president Lamine Diack.

Havelange being driven into retreat remains the last public image but, for all that, time is likely to be more realistic about his role in sport's magnificent march.

Jules Rimet and Pierre de Coubertin are up there as founders of the two greatest modern world sports events, but someone always has to pick up the bill.

And, like it or not, Havelange was the man who found the way to do it.

Keir Radnedge

Influence...Havelange (brown suit) introduces sports minister Denis Howell to the Brazil team at the 1966 World Cup in England

"It's happened to us in previous Super Cups; we have it there for the taking and then, due to minor details, we miss out on a trophy we could have won"

Sevilla midfielder Vitolo

UEFA SUPER CUP

Real Madrid win all-Spanish UEFA Super Cup

Right-back Dani Carvajal was the unlikely hero for Real Madrid, scoring the 119th-minute winner as the Champions League winners beat Europa League holders Sevilla 3-2 in Trondheim, Norway, to claim the UEFA Super Cup.

The victory, played out in rainswept conditions at Rosenborg's Lerkendal Stadion, was the second European trophy for Real coach Zinedine Zidane since he took over in January.

The European champions took the lead through Marco Asensio, who became the club's youngest scorer in a European Final with a stunning long-range shot. The impressive 20-year-old, who spent last season on loan at Espanyol, took his chance in a team which featured only four of the starting line-up from May's victorious game in Milan. Cristiano Ronaldo and Gareth Bale were among those rested after their Euro 2016 exertions, while Zidane elected to leave Colombian midfielder James Rodriguez on the bench.

Sevilla equalised through Franco Vazquez, a summer signing from Palermo, who fired home through a crowded penalty area.

Madrid skipper Sergio Ramos, who began his career with Sevilla, turned out to be both a hero and villain in the second half. The defender tripped Sevilla winger Vitolo for a penalty that was converted by substitute Yevhen Konoplyanka but then, in the 93rd minute, he arrived unmarked in the six-yard box to head home and send the game into extra-time.

Sevilla saw Timothee Kolodziejczak sent off early in the extra period, but Real failed to take advantage, with Rodriguez missing two good chances.

The match looked like going to penalties until Carvajal's late strike. The full-back, who missed Spain's Euro 2016 campaign after getting injured in the Champions League Final, ran all the way into the Sevilla area before firing home.

Sevilla, who were playing under new boss Jorge Sampaoli, had also lost in the previous year's Super Cup, losing 5-4 to Barcelona.

Zidane, who was soaked with water by his players during the post-match celebrations, said: "In football you never know what's going to happen. The good thing about tonight is that we knew it was going to be difficult, but we never gave up.

"They got ahead in a key part of the game, but we never gave up and Sergio's goal in the last minute brought us back to life.

He added: "It's my second title [as Madrid coach], the first of this season and I'm very happy with the effort the guys have made."

The stadium in Trondheim was the latest venue for UEFA's peripatetic season-opener, which is now played in early August at a different European venue each year. Next year's game will be in Skopje, Macedonia. WS

UEFA SUPER CUP

Aug 9, 2016
Trondheim, Norway

REAL MADRID (Spa) **3** (Asensio 21, Ramos 90+3, Carvajal 119)
SEVILLA (Spa) **2** (F Vazquez 41, Konoplyanka pen 72)
Aet. HT: 1-1. **90 mins:** 2-2.
Att: 17,939. **Ref:** Mazic (Ser)

REAL MADRID: Casilla; Carvajal, Varane, Ramos, Marcelo; Kovacic (Rodriguez 73), Casemiro, Isco (Modric 66); L Vazquez, Morata (Benzema 62), Asensio

SEVILLA: Rico; Pareja, Carrico (Rami 51), Kolodziejczak; Kiyotake, Iborra (Kranevitter 74), F Vazquez; N'Zonzi; Mariano, Vietto (Konoplyanka 67), Vitolo
Sent-off: Kolodziejczak 93

Winner...Dani Carvajal scores in extra-time to clinch victory for Real Madrid

"The gold is ours, but it belongs to God. God loves Neymar like he loves all this team"

Brazil goalkeeper Weverton (right)

Headliner

Neymar

Captain provides lead for victorious Brazil

How long will Neymar be content to remain in Lionel Messi's shadow at Barcelona? That was the question the star of Brazil's Olympic Games took back with him to Spain after his and his team's triumph at Rio 2016.

Olympic coach Rogerio Micale resisted media invitations to put the player on a pedestal among Brazil's great World Cup-winnng heroes of the past. But he did indicate a belief that the player's ongoing rise will depend only on the platforms available.

Neymar had missed the Copa America Centenario in June, giving Barca no excuse to stop him taking up the captaincy to lead his country's bid for a first Olympic football gold. Like his team-mates he struggled to put his game together at first, but ended the tension-packed fortnight on top of the Olympic world.

"I thought he was the right player to be our captain and he proved it with his maturity," said Micale. "Personally, I have the best possible impressions of Neymar. The whole team does.

"He is still only 24 and already he has won a second Olympic medal. His next step is to win a World Cup and he has all the attributes to make that happen.

"It's hard to compare him with players from other eras, but everything's pointing in the right direction, especially when you consider the titles he has already won with his clubs and now his country."

Reviewing the gold-medal victory in general, Micale continued: "I had mixed feelings before the game. There was a lot of anxiety and tension because of events we all know. Now I feel a sense of achievement mixed with relation and relief for an unprecedented moment in Brazilian football history.

"I am sure this will has brought a reason for the Brazilian people to gain renewed pride and confidence in the national team.

"We knew it was a huge responsibility because football is number one in Brazil.

"Now this phase is past we can look to the future more confident and proud that Brazilian football is not dead. We have great potential and can have real hope to achieve greater things again in the future."

Keir Radnedge

"He is still only 24 and already he has won a second Olympic medal. His next step is to win a World Cup"

Brazil coach Rogerio Micale on Neymar

Golden moment...Neymar celebrates scoring the winning penalty in the men's Olympic Final

Paul GARDNER

THE WORLDWIDE VIEW

Age cheating makes a mockery of FIFA's youth tournaments

Ahead of the game...Nigeria's Kelechi Nwakali with the 2015 Under-17 World Cup

In 2003, the Nigerian sports minister, Stephen Akiga, told AFP: "We have for a while now been fielding players far above the ages agreed for some international age-group competitions."

More recently, in August this year, former Nigerian FA president Anthony Kojo said: "We use over-age players for junior championships, I know that. Why not say it? It's the truth. We always cheat. It's a fact."

FIFA has long been aware of the problem, particularly in its under-17 World Cup. I covered the first 10 of those tournaments, and quickly learned of a widespread belief among coaches – especially the Europeans – that the African and Asian teams were using over-age players. FIFA clamped down – not on the suspected cheaters, but on the critics, and Portugal's coach Carlos Queiroz was told he would be sent home if he made any more comments on the matter.

X-ray tests were introduced but then ridiculed when it became clear that they had a margin of error measurable in years, not months. In 2003, FIFA announced that the x-rays would be replaced by MRI tests on wrist bones.

At that year's under-17 tournament in Finland, FIFA's chief medical officer Jiri Dvorak informed me that, whatever the MRI tests revealed, the results would not be made public. They were strictly for the FIFA archives.

> "We use over-age players for junior championships... We always cheat. It's a fact"
>
> **Ex Nigerian FA president Anthony Kojo**

Was Dvorak telling me that, even if a team was discovered to have over-age players, no one would be informed, no action would be taken, and the team would continue in the tournament, possibly winning it?

Yet something definitely happened in 2003. For the first time ever, no African team got out of the first round. The same thing happened in 2005. This in a tournament that had, up until then, been pretty much dominated by Nigeria and Ghana, with two wins and two runners-up medals each.

Had the threat of the MRI tests made a difference? Possibly – but normal service seemed to return in 2007 with Nigeria winning again. After a runners-up position in 2009, Nigeria returned to winning ways, taking the title in 2013 and 2015.

Nigeria's "Golden Eaglets" were back, and so were the critics. The 2015 team was widely deemed to include over-age players. But nothing, of course, was heard from FIFA, who still, apparently, conducted those secret tests.

Then, in August this year, came two bombshells. In the Nigerian capital, Abuja, an under-17 camp of some 60 players, which was being used to select a team for a game against Niger, was suddenly visited by a medical team from the African Confederation, empowered to administer MRI tests. When they had finished their tests, they announced that an astonishing 26 of the players – nearly half the camp – were over-age.

Shortly after that, the whole idea of reliable MRI tests was called into question. An article in the respected *Scientific American* said flatly that they were unreliable, that there was simply much too much individual variation in bone development to make the sort of correlation that FIFA was making between the MRI measurements and chronological age, leaving the whole topic in total disarray.

Without a reliable method of checking ages, FIFA simply cannot enforce its age regulations. The most reliable method remains documentation. And that is precisely what is often lacking for players from Africa. That, of course, is not deliberate cheating, but it clearly opens the way for those – the coaches and administrators – who see the advantages of fudging age statistics.

FIFA's silence over its own MRI tests – a silence that suggests it has never found anything untoward – now seems highly questionable. But calling for FIFA to publish its results now seems a rather hollow demand. After all, what's the point if the MRI tests can't be trusted?

The big loser here is the under-17 World Cup itself. If it cannot be conducted without cheating, or without the corroding suspicion of cheating, how can FIFA continue to organise it?

As someone with extensive experience of past under-17 World Cups, I would despair to see it abandoned. I have always found it the liveliest, the most human of FIFA's competitions. But if its very integrity cannot be guaranteed, what alternative is there to closing it down? WS

WWW.UKSOCCERSHOP.COM
INFO@UKSOCCERSHOP.COM - 0844 332 1221

UKSOCCERSHOP

NUMBER ONE FOR FOOTBALL SHIRTS

SHIRT PRINTING

Customise this season's new shirts from Barcelona, Real Madrid, Bayern, England, Ajax, Catalunya and more in the latest printing styles!

NEXT DAY DELIVERY

DHL NEXT DAY DELIVERY TO UK, EUROPE AND USA. REST OF THE WORLD: 2/3 DAYS. FULLY TRACKABLE SHIPPING TO EVERY COUNTRY!

NEW 2016-17 CLUB SHIRTS

MAN UTD 3RD
(IBRAHIMOVIC 9)
£69.99

MAN CITY HOME
(SANE 19)
£69.99

CHELSEA AWAY
(HAZARD 10)
£69.99

LIVERPOOL 3RD
(COUTINHO 10)
£69.99

DORTMUND HOME
(GOTZE 10)
£69.99

JUVENTUS HOME
(HIGUAIN 9)
£69.99

BAYERN HOME
(SANCHES 35)
£69.99

PSG HOME
(CAVANI 9)
£75.00

ICELAND HOME
(G.SIGURDSSON 10)
£75.00

INTER MILAN HOME
(ICARDI 9)
£75.00

WWW.UKSOCCERSHOP.COM

Keir RADNEDGE

THE INSIDER

Three-way fight for the vacant UEFA presidency

Candidate... Angel Maria Villar

After a near year-long stasis, UEFA is about to find itself a new president, and the options for delegates of the 55 national associations, who meet in an emergency congress on September 14 in Athens, are intriguing.

The three runners are: comparatively unknown Aleksander Ceferin, who is head of the Slovenia FA, Dutch federation president Michael Van Praag and senior vice-president Angel Maria Villar from Spain.

Ceferin, who is the favourite, has support from the old eastern block nations plus the Nordics, while the Republic of Ireland has also declared itself in his camp. And their reasoning is simple – these are the nations who want to maintain the status quo in terms of Champions League and European Championship access which was reorganised to suit them (and his own electoral purposes) by Michel Platini.

The Frenchman was removed from the platform last October by the FIFA ethics committee as it launched its investigation into the strange affair of the SFr2million paid to him by then FIFA president Sepp Blatter out of world federation funds in February 2011.

Platini said it was a long-delayed payment for work undertaken as Blatter's "football counsellor" between 1999 and 2002, yet neither the ethics chamber nor the subsequent appeal panels ever saw evidential paperwork.

That was one mystery; the second one was how investigators from the Office of the Swiss Attorney General turned up this issue so conveniently and quickly. Benny Alon, the ticket tout who helped bring down Jerome Valcke, pointed a finger at the now-banned FIFA secretary-general but without any evidence.

> UEFA has been standing still for 10 months, and counting. There are a number of important issues to be dealt with which have not been addressed

With Platini out of the picture, a new president is needed before UEFA seals the new 2019-21 deal with the clubs and the TV companies and sponsors – and with it the usual ongoing power struggle between the big clubs and the federations.

Sabre rattling always includes scare stories about breakaways and super leagues, and it has been no different this time round. Interestingly, these "leaks" play into the hands of Ceferin. While Van Praag and Villar are viewed as members of the western European establishment which needs to keep the big clubs happy, a vote for Ceferin could be seen as a vote for balance and a fair share-out.

As Platini proved when ousting Lennart Johansson and then securing re-election twice over, this is a powerful political argument.

When it comes to political liaisons, however, Villar probably has an advantage, but his electoral situation is complex.

After 26 years running the Spanish federation, the Basque middle man sitting between the rivals from Madrid and Barcelona is regarded as a conservative member of international football's old guard. But as a senior vice-president of UEFA and FIFA, Villar was an opponent of the investigations into the 2018 and 2022 World Cup bidding farrago and was rapped over the knuckles for it by the ethics committee.

He is also coming under pressure in Spain, particularly from Sports Council president Miguel Cardenal, and faces a contested presidential election immediately after the UEFA vote. To become president of Europe's federation would offer Villar an escape route from the gathering storm back home.

A serial avoider of the media, Villar has been reticent in offering any reason as to why Europe's associations should vote for him, apart from political loyalty from Latin quarters.

The same cannot be said about Van Praag, who has published a cogent manifesto and can claim to be the ideal candidate to take over in these difficult times.

As a former club president of Ajax, head of the KNVB and successful businessman in his own right, Van Praag has an unparalleled insight into the way the system works. And as the man who stood up, in Sao Paulo in 2014, and told Blatter to his face that it was time to get out, he is also not afraid of a fight.

Van Praag has entitled his manifesto "Building Bridges" and in it he preaches a need for unity at a time when "mutual connection

Flying visit...Gianni Infantino (left) with Nigeria president Muhammadu Buhari

and trust do not go without saying". This sounds convoluted, but basically he is extolling the need for credibility of governance, which eroded under Platini.

Warning obliquely against the power blocks already evident in the presidential campaign, Van Praag demands a "new leadership...a unifier – someone who can build bridges between associations, key stakeholders and different cultures – within our world of football but also with the world outside".

He warns: "UEFA has been virtually standing still for 10 months, and counting. There are a number of important issues to be dealt with which have not been addressed at all in that time. They need to be tackled, and soon, because we cannot afford to lose any more time. It is important to choose someone with experience. Someone who can get straight to work. Someone with a large internal and external network that includes Brussels. Someone who knows what it takes.

"Someone you can safely entrust with European football."

Van Praag's promises include better consultation and support for FAs, leagues, agents, clubs, FIFPro and FIFA at a time when "global football is in the middle of the biggest change in its history". With one eye on the minnow vote, Van Praag has promised to counter the threat of a super league; with the other on the media he has also promised "full transparency on the remuneration of the UEFA president".

Rather than bridges, Ceferin's manifesto talks about "balance" but many of his points are similar to those of Van Praag. However, he is far more upfront about his will to put the likes of Real Madrid, Barcelona, Bayern and the Manchester duo in their place.

He has stated a desire to "defend the European sports model and make sure that UEFA competitions never become closed leagues or tournaments: clubs and national teams from each and every member association should have the opportunity to play in UEFA competitions including the UEFA Champions League and the Euro".

That suggests Ceferin not only favours the expanded 24-team format of the European Championship finals but might look at an increase to a 32-nation field.

Ceferin's manifesto is an intriguing mix between firm pointers and odd corporate aggrandisement.

For instance, he advocates "being at the cutting edge of the fight against corruption and match fixing", proportionality of disciplinary fines with respect to club and federation budgets, as well as term limits for the UEFA president and executive committee members, though he does not dare enter into details.

Interestingly, he also says that "only representatives active in their respective national associations can be members of the UEFA executive committee". In the current circumstances, this would already have spelled expulsion for Wolfgang Niersbach, who remains on the ExCo – and the FIFA Council – despite having quit as German federation president last winter over the 2006 World Cup cash scandal.

Ceferin also indulges in delusions of corporate grandeur, stating that he wants "his" UEFA to "scale even greater heights" and maintain a balance of "unity, stability and further prosperity" while also being a "role model of good governance and transparency" to become "the best sports organisation in the world".

If he does win, he may find that maintaining unity is easier said than done.

Manifesto...Michael Van Praag

Gianni Infantino escapes...for now

FIFA insiders doubt whether president Gianni Infantino's ethics-chamber escape over allegations concerning flights and expenses will be the last anyone may have heard about power games in Zurich.

Speculation erupted early in June after Infantino failed to agree his remuneration contract and the uncertainty over his personal expenditure in office was criticised by up to four whistle-blowers.

He had created waves with the speed of administrative changes before and after the controversial Mexico City congress in May, which was followed swiftly by the resignation of Domenico Scala from the audit panel, plus sackings that included that of interim secretary-general and finance director Markus Kattner.

The anti-Infantino leaks began soon afterwards, focusing on flights to World Cup hosts Russia and Qatar, and a family audience with Pope Francis in Rome.

The ethics committee decided the complaints were not watertight enough to stand up in a court of law – the Swiss federal court, which holds jurisdiction over CAS – and therefore no action was taken.

Whether he will learn from the shot fired across his bows, only time will tell.

"It's been a difficult few weeks but that will never cloud the amazing journey and experience your great club has given to me"

Joe Hart says goodbye to Manchester City fans after joining Torino on loan

PEOPLE ON THE MOVE

EUROPE

Former Arsenal, Barcelona and France striker **THIERRY HENRY** was named assistant coach of Belgium, joining the backroom staff of new coach Roberto Martinez, who replaced Marc Wilmots at the start of August.

Russia appointed **STANISLAV CHERCHESOV** as national coach as successor to Leonid Slutsky, who stepped down following a disappointing campaign at Euro 2016.

In charge...Stanislav Cherchesov of Russia

FRAN ESCRIBA replaced Marcelino as Villarreal coach the week before the Spanish side's Champions League play-off against Monaco.

Former Portuguese national coach **PAULO BENTO**, who left Brazilian side Cruzeiro in July, was appointed coach of reigning Greek champions Olympiakos, who sacked Victor Sanchez after just two months in charge.

DICK ADVOCAAT quit after just three months in his role as assistant coach of Holland's national side to replace Vitor Pereira as boss of Turkish side Fenerbahce.

Former England defender **JONATHAN WOODGATE**, who spent three years playing for Real Madrid and is now based in Spain, joined Liverpool's scouting staff.

SOUTH AMERICA

Paraguay appointed **FRANCISCO ARCE** as national boss for a second time. The 45-year-old, who was sacked by his country in 2012, replaces Argentinian coach Ramon Diaz, who resigned after the Copa America in June.

CONCACAF

Former England striker **CARLTON COLE** joined US third-tier Sacramento Republic after being released by Scottish champions Celtic in the summer.

Milton Melendez replaced **DANIEL FERNANDEZ** as coach of Alianza with the Salvadorian side second in their CONCACAF Champions League group.

AFRICA

Former Gabon, Niger and Burkina Faso coach **GERNOT ROHR** was appointed technical adviser to Nigeria's national team.

Fresh start...Frank De Boer is the new owners' choice at Inter

De Boer replaces Mancini at Inter

Former Ajax boss **FRANK DE BOER** took over from Roberto Mancini as coach of Internazionale two weeks before the start of the Serie A campaign.

The changes were one of the first acts of Inter's new owners, the Chinese electronics giant Suning, who splashed out €270m for a 68.55 per cent stake in the club in June, effectively taking over ownership from Erick Thohir, the Indonesian who bought a majority shareholding from historic Inter owner Massimo Moratti three years ago.

Mancini's departure did not exactly come out of the blue. Reportedly sidelined and left out of the loop regarding transfer activity. Many at Inter were disappointed with a fourth-place finish last season after they had been top at Christmas. Club insiders felt that in his second season in charge – and with a squad of players largely of his own choosing: Marcelo Brozovic, Geoffrey Kondogbia, Felipe Melo, Ivan Perisic, Jeison Murillo and Miranda to name just a few – Mancini might have done better.

His cause was hardly helped by some poor friendly results, with Inter losing to CSKA Sofia, Paris Saint-Germain, Bayern Munich and, most embarrassingly, 6-1 to Tottenham Hotspur.

Paddy Agnew

Second chance... Francisco Arce

"Thanks for everything"

A tearful Bastian Schweinsteiger bids farewell to the German national side after his final game, a friendly against Finland

Appointments, sackings and loans

ASIA

Former Manchester City manager **MANUEL PELLEGRINI** replaced Li Tie as coach of Chinese Super League side Hebei China Fortune.

Australia's all-time leading goalscorer **TIM CAHILL** joined Melbourne City on a three-year deal, having left Chinese Super League side Hangzhou Greentown in July.

Former Australia international and national under-20 coach **PAUL OKON** replaced Tony Walmsley in charge of Central Coast Mariners.

Malian midfielder **SEYDOU KEITA**, who won two UEFA Champions League Finals with Barcelona, joined El Jaish of Qatar from Italian side Roma.

EUROPE

After leading Rostov to second place in the Russian Premier League last season, and through to the Champions League play-off round this term, **KURBAN BERDYEV** stepped down as the club's coach. **DMITRI ALENICHEV** quit as Spartak Moscow boss after they were eliminated from the Europa League.

BREDE HANGELAND, who won 91 caps for Norway and was a Europa League finalist with Fulham in 2010, announced his retirement at the age of 35 after being released by Premier League side Crystal Palace during the summer.

NIKOLAY MITOV resigned two hours after his appointment as boss of Bulgarian side Botev Plovdiv after fans turned up at the club's training ground to protest at his appointment. Mitov, a former player and coach of rivals Levski Sofia, had replaced Nikolay Kostov.

Stepped down...Kurban Berdyev

AFRICA

SAMSON SIASIA resigned as coach of Nigeria's national team after winning bronze at the Olympics.

Dutch coach **MARTIN JOL** quit Egypt's Al Ahly after they failed to reach the African Champions League semi-finals.

Cameroonian player **SAMUEL NLEND** was sacked by Al Ittihad after tests revealed he was HIV positive. The 21-year-old had signed a three year contract with the Egyptian club four days earlier.

Bronze...Samson Siasia quit after the Olympics

Record-breaking Keane scored on his international departure

Republic of Ireland's all-time leading goalscorer **ROBBIE KEANE** quit international football with a strike that took him level with Gerd Muller on 68 international goals.

In Europe, only Ferenc Puskas (84 goals for Hungary and Spain) and Miroslav Klose (71 for Germany) scored more times for their country.

LA Galaxy striker Keane scored on his final appearance for the Republic, a 4-0 friendly win over Oman in Dublin, to take his goal tally to 68 in 146 appearances over 18 years.

England's record goalscorer **WAYNE ROONEY** announced he will retire from international football after the 2018 World Cup in Russia.

Other players who have recently stepped down from the international game include Croatia's captain and record appearance holder **DARIJO SRNA**, Germany striker **LUKAS PODOLSKI** and Scotland skipper **SCOTT BROWN**.

Hungary goalkeeper **GABOR KIRALY** announced his international retirement at the age of 40, having made his 107th appearance at Euro 2016, against Portugal.

End of an era... Robbie Keane

"It's not normal to go to Turin, pass the medical and then go back to square one"

Belgian midfielder Axel Witsel expresses his shock after his €25million from Zenit St Petersburg to Juventus collapsed at the eleventh hour

TRANSFERS

Pogba leads record transfer spending

"Never go back" used to be the mantra for players looking for their next transfer. Try telling that to Manchester United and Paul Pogba after the world-record deal that saw United pay Juventus €105m for the French midfielder, who left England four years ago to join the Italian champions after declining to sign a new contract at Old Trafford.

Juventus also received €30m from Real Madrid, who exercised their buyback clause in the contract of Alvaro Morata, who left the Spanish capital for Juve in 2014 for €20m.

Chelsea sprung a surprise by re-signing Brazilian defender David Luiz from Paris Saint-Germain for €38.5m, having sold the 29-year-old to the French champions for €50m two years ago.

The Pogba money enabled Juventus to break the Italian transfer record with a €90m move for Gonzalo Higuain.

The size of the fee drew criticism in Italy but Juventus, who also brought in Bosnian Miralem Pjanic (Roma, €32m) and Croatian Marko Pjaca (Dinamo Zagreb, €23m) spent only €25m "netto" in strengthening their squad.

Premier League clubs, their wallets boosted by a new TV deal, spent more than £1.1 billion on transfer fees, although the net figure was closer to £750m.

Roughly £365m of the £1.1bn was spent on existing Premier League players, suggesting that selling clubs had one price for sales to Premier League clubs and another, lower one for the rest of Europe.

But it was not just in England that money talks. Highly regarded teenager Oliver Burke, who had been linked with a number of Premier League clubs, became the most expensive Scottish player of all time following a €15m switch to Bundesliga new boys Red Bull Leipzig.

A number of Portugal's Euro 2016 victorious squad were on the move, notably midfielder Joao Mario who left Sporting for Internazionale in a €40m deal, joining Raphael Guerreiro (Sochaux to Borussia Dortmund), Renato Sanches (Benfica to Bayern) and Nani (Fenerbahce to Valencia).

And it was not just about fees. Leading players were also available on free transfers, including Brazilian Dani Alves, who joined Juventus from Barcelona, while France keeper Steve Mandanda moved to Crystal Palace after leaving Marseille.

Ironically, Chelsea were priced out of a number of deals for central defenders with Italian clubs, such as Napoli's Kalidou Koulibaly, with many citing Chelsea's original €50m sale of Luiz to PSG as setting the benchmark for top-quality defenders.

Chelsea now have 37 players out on loan, including Juan Cuadrado at Juventus.

Other interesting loan deals included Simone Zaza (Juventus to West Ham United), Jack Wilshere (Arsenal to

Paul Pogba... the world's most expensive player

Loan...Mario Balotelli (third left) has joined Nice from Liverpool

Off-loaded...Samir Nasri has joined Sevilla

"Balotelli on a free is still paying over the odds"

Jamie Carragher on the Italian striker's loan move to Nice from Liverpool

Bournemouth), Mario Balotelli (Liverpool to Nice), Yevhen Konoplyanka (Sevilla to Schalke), Munir El Haddadi (Barcelona to Valencia) and Mehdi Benatia (Bayern Munich to Juventus).

Manchester City sent a number of high-profile players on loan as new coach Pep Guardiola re-worked his squad. Samir Nasri joined Sevilla, Joe Hart moved to Torino and Eliaquim Mangala went to Valencia.

While some loan deals – Wilshere and Hart – reflected the player's need for regular football, others highlighted the rising cost of wages and the desire of clubs to get players "off the books".

While Premier League clubs spent record sums on transfers, an even bigger figure was committed in player wages – a huge outlay for clubs, who can spread the cost of transfer fees over the course of a contract.

Some deals failed to make it over the line. Belgian midfielder Axel Witsel spent the final day of the transfer window in Turin, finalising a move to Juventus. He was at Juve's HQ for a reported 13 hours, having completed a medical, only for the deal to fall through at the final moment when, according to Witsel's agent, Zenit upped their asking price.

The silver lining for Witsel and his representatives is that his Zenit contract expires next summer. So from January they will be able to negotiate with interested parties about a free transfer.

And so the transfer wheel rolls on.

Gavin Hamilton

Benchmark...David Luiz returns to Chelsea

New start...Joe Hart

THIS SUMMER'S BIGGEST TRANSFERS

City...John Stones

Inter...Joao Mario

Bayern...Sanches

Paul Pogba	Juventus	to	Manchester United	€105m
Gonzalo Higuain	Napoli	to	Juventus	€90m
Hulk	Zenit	to	Shanghai SIPG	€55.8m
John Stones	Everton	to	Manchester City	€55.6
Leroy Sane	Schalke	to	Manchester City	€50m
Joao Mario	Sporting	to	Internazionale	€45m
Granit Xhaka	Borussia Monchengaldbach	to	Arsenal	€45m
Henrikh Mkhitaryan	Borussia Dortmund	to	Manchester United	€42m
Sadio Mane	Southampton	to	Liverpool	€41.2m
Shkodran Mustafi	Valencia	to	Arsenal	€41m
Joao Mario	Sporting	to	Internazionale	€40m
Michy Batshuayi	Marseille	to	Chelsea	€39m
David Luiz	Paris Saint-Germain	to	Chelsea	€38.5m
Eric Bailly	Villarreal	to	Manchester United	€38m
N'Golo Kante	Leicester City	to	Chelsea	€35.8m
Andre Gomes	Valencia	to	Barcelona	€35m
Mats Hummels	Borussia Dortmund	to	Bayern Munich	€35m
Renato Sanches	Benfica	to	Bayern Munich	€35m
Moussa Sissoko	Newcastle United	to	Tottenham Hotspur	€35m
Grzegorz Krychowiak	Sevilla	to	Paris Saint-Germain	€33.6m
Kevin Gameiro	Sevilla	to	Atletico Madrid	€32m
Gabriel Jesus	Palmeiras	to	Manchester City	€32m
Arkadiusz Milik	Ajax	to	Napoli	€32m
Miralem Pjanic	Roma	to	Juventus	€32m
Christian Benteke	Liverpool	to	Crystal Palace	€31.2m
Paco Alcacer	Valencia	to	Barcelona	€30m
Alvaro Morata	Juventus	to	Real Madrid	€30m
Andre Schurrle	Wolfsburg	to	Borussia Dortmund	€30m
Islam Slimani	Sporting	to	Leicester City	€30m
Yannick Bolasie	Crystal Palace	to	Everton	€28.9m
Georginio Wijnaldum	Newcastle United	to	Liverpool	€27.5m
Breel Embolo	Basle	to	Schalke	€27.5m
Gabriel Barbosa	Santos	to	Internazionale	€27m
Ilkay Gundogan	Borussia Dortmund	to	Manchester City	€27m
Mario Gotze	Bayern Munich	to	Borussia Dortmund	€26m
Nico Gaitan	Benfica	to	Atletico Madrid	€25m
Jese	Real Madrid	to	Paris Saint-Germain	€25m
Samuel Umtiti	Lyon	to	Barcelona	€25m
Andre Ayew	Swansea City	to	West Ham United	€24m
Marcos Alonso	Fiorentina	to	Chelsea	€23m
Marko Pjaca	Dinamo Zagreb	to	Juventus	€23m
Antonio Candreva	Lazio	to	Internazionale	€22m
Vincent Janssen	AZ	to	Tottenham Hotspur	€22.1m
Aleksandar Dragovic	Dynamo Kiev	to	Bayer Leverkusen	€20m
Kevin Volland	Hoffenheim	to	Bayer Leverkusen	€20m
Lucas Perez	Deportivo La Coruna	to	Arsenal	€20m

BIGGEST DEALS BY COUNTRY

ENGLAND	Paul Pogba, Juventus	to	Man United	€105m
ITALY	Gonzalo Higuain, Napoli	to	Juventus	€90m
CHINA	Hulk, Zenit	to	Shanghai SIPG	€55.8m
SPAIN	Andre Gomes, Valencia	to	Barcelona	€35m
GERMANY	Mats Hummels, B Dortmund	to	Bayern	€35m
FRANCE	Jese, Real Madrid	to	PSG	€33.5m
PORTUGAL	Rafa Silva, Braga	to	Benfica	€16m
RUSSIA	Fernando, Sampdoria	to	Spartak Moscow	€12m
HOLLAND	Hakim Ziyech, Twente	to	Ajax	€11m
BELGIUM	Nicolae Stanciu, Steaua Bucharest	to	Anderlecht	€7.8m
TURKEY	Martin Skrtel, Liverpool	to	Fenerbahce	€6m
AUSTRIA	Moanes Dabour, Grasshoppers	to	Red Bull Salzburg	€5.6
SCOTLAND	Scott Sinclair, Aston Villa	to	Celtic	€4.1m

Barca buy... Andre Gomes

Brian GLANVILLE

THE VOICE OF FOOTBALL

Havelange: FIFA's immoral master

After Joao Havelange died peacefully, and wealthily, in his bed at the age of 100, so many quotations suggest themselves.

"For evil to flourish it is enough for good men to do nothing," from the 18th-century political philosopher Edmund Burke. Or, if you prefer, the words of Robert Walpole, the first English prime minister, somewhat earlier that century, who said: "Every man has his price."

In his outrageous 24 years in office as president of FIFA, Havelange did incalculable harm to football, and so long as FIFA exists it will not be put right.

Yet when he died, a huge new Rio stadium had been named after him. That he lasted so long in power, re-elected every four years, is a shocking reflection of the morality of world football.

FIFA being the absurd organisation that it is, when every member nation whether large or small has a vote, it was all too easy for him – and later for his ghastly successor Sepp Blatter – to raise enough votes through financial chicanery.

But what of the plenitude of European countries, alas very much including our British own, who failed to make any proper challenge? Not until it came to the FIFA presidential election in Seoul before the 2002 World Cup did Adam Crozier, then the controversial FA chief executive, subsequently a major success running ITV, have the courage and gumption to attack Blatter's presidency. But, of course, he was wasting his time.

Havelange was an accomplished swimmer and water polo player, competing in both the 1936 Olympics, when Nazi efficiency impressed him, and in London in 1948. In his highly regarded book, *How They Stole the Game*, which was published in 1999, the year after Havelange at long last quit the FIFA presidency, David Yallop paints a devastating picture of how Havelange gained power in FIFA.

To unseat Sir Stanley Rous in his office,

Unseated... Stanley Rous

Honoured...Rio's Estadio Olimpico Joao Havelange

Powerful...Joao Havelange

he financed his campaign with money pilfered from Brazil's sports federation, augmenting this with money extracted, to the detriment of an outraged partner, from a company he ran. He claimed to run a bus company in Sao Paulo, but in fact, as Yallop shows, his connections with it were largely peripheral.

To defeat Rous at the FIFA Congress in Frankfurt, Havelange visited 86 countries – lying to *Playboy* magazine that he did this with his own money – and profiting at the election from those African countries whose representatives he brought to Germany. A trip which they never could have afforded from their own meagre funds.

In later years he would proclaim the fact that he took no salary from FIFA, though with his various finagling he didn't need it.

> Havelange did incalculable harm to football, and so long as FIFA exists it will not be put right

His boast that he had vastly increased FIFA's revenues was hardly consistent with how he sold World Cup communication rights to the ISL company run by Horst Dassler, who immediately re-sold them for a higher price. He always claimed not to be interested in politics, but as Yallop, who expressed incredulity at the claim points out, he was immersed in them. And he was on excellent terms for years with the army generals who imposed a brutal regime on Brazil.

It was futile for the honest general secretary of FIFA, Helmut Kaser, to tell Havelange: "The money from Coca-Cola is not yours. You must stop behaving as if they have donated it to you personally." Kaser didn't last.

And as Yallop points out, even when Havelange had at last resigned his FIFA presidency, he stayed another six weeks at Paris' Bristol Hotel, at a cost of £147,000.

The charge sheet is endless.

Put the League Cup out of its misery

Alas and alack, the League Cup, or whatever it calls itself now, is still opprobriously with us. The bigger clubs came into it as usual in August and the crowds, if they even deserved to be called that, were as pitifully small as ever.

Burnley were one of what might be called the worst offenders, resting practically their whole team and going out with ignominy, in front of anything but a decent crowd.

The League Cup, intended as a rival to the FA Cup, began as a midweek hole-and-corner affair. Not until the late Alan Hardaker, as secretary of the Football League, got its Final transferred to Wembley and managed to get its winners qualified for the UEFA Cup – at the expense of a first division club – did the competition take some sort of wing.

Time and time again today we hear that clubs are obliged to play too much football. Well, here surely is an economy which they could make.

But of course, they won't.

Choice...Sam Allardyce

Borrowed time ...the League Cup

Jury out on England boss Allardyce

Regardless of the result against Slovakia, I feel that Sam Allardyce has made a somewhat erratic start to his tenure as England's manager.

Not picking the ebullient and precocious Marcus Rashford for the senior team but dumping him among the under-21s was embarrassingly exposed when Rashford appeared as a substitute for Manchester United at Hull and scored the winning goal.

Easy, one knows, to be wise after the event, but surely Rashford had done enough in France – and so much more than anybody else – that he was worth a place, which was hardly a gamble.

Meantime, we learn Allardyce actually wanted to pick the Frenchman Steven N'Zonzi, based on the years he had played in England. Shades of Italy's plethora of caps for players from South America of Italian descent. Former Italy coach Vittorio Pozzo used to insist: "If they can die for Italy, they can play for Italy."

And it appears that the benighted FA is looking for other, dubiously qualified players abroad. What hope for the other Rashfords of this world?

Andre Gray exposes FA double standards

Puzzled...Andre Gray

The curious and displeasing case of Andre Gray, the Burnley centre-forward and his homophobic outburst, puzzles me.

What he said was beyond doubt appalling, that homosexuals "should burn and die". Indefensible, yet it was said in January 2012. Only now do we hear that the Football Association are to punish him.

We presumably have to assume that they have just been made aware of the outburst. If not, their belated decision would be unimaginable. Between Gray's outburst and the recent FA intervention, no civil or criminal procedure was initiated.

When I asked Burnley's manager Sean Dyche, after his team had lost at Chelsea, what he made of it, he replied that I knew as much as he did. Which in essence is nothing at all.

Remote shades, you might say, of the John Terry case when, at QPR, during a Chelsea match, he let fly a volley of obscene abuse which he insisted was not aimed at his opponent, Anton Ferdinand. The Westminster court cleared him.

The FA, which previously had just abrogated a rule whereby it could not proceed after a criminal court had exonerated a player, found him guilty, fined and suspended him.

This, in the era of unimpressive FA leader David Bernstein, led to Terry, arguably England's most impressive centre-back, refusing to play for his country, a decision to which he stuck.

● Read Brian Glanville's weekly online column at worldsoccer.com

PRO:DIRECT

SEE THE FULL **PUMA evoSPEED COLLECTION** ONLINE INCLUDING JUNIORS

THE LIGHTEST BOOT YOU CAN WEAR

PUMA evoSPEED He - FG: 131227 - £275

Lighter than the standard evoSPEED SL, the PUMA He features cutting-edge technology to produce the lightest boot you can wear, enhancing your speed and creating even quicker forever faster moments.

LIMITED EDITION

eyewitness

Keir Radnedge reports from Rio de Janeiro

BRAZIL

Golden redemption

By beating Germany in the Olympic Final, the hosts won the one major title that had eluded them – and banished the demons of 2014

Whatever worked, or did not work, the Rio Olympic Games ended in gloriously exuberant relief for the Brazilian hosts as the *Selecao*, after three past silver medals, emerged with football gold for the first time.

The plot exploded straight out of a Hollywood script as the national team – reviled, shamed, embarrassed and derided after the 7-1 demolition by Germany in the 2014 World Cup semi-final on home soil – recovered from the brink to claim a redemptive triumph.

Not only that but Neymar, the young hero saddled with the bitterness of defeat in 2012 and an absence through injury in 2014, emerged through a hail of media and fan fire to convert the winning spot-kick in the penalty shoot-out victory over the Germans in a jam-packed Maracana.

For the host nation it could not have ended in any better way than that. Of course, the country was delighted with its 18 other medals, including six golds in sports of which local fans were barely aware, but it was football which mattered the most by far.

Usually a sideshow at the Olympics, the men's football tournament commanded centre stage for Brazilians while the rest of the world was transfixed by Usain Bolt and Michael Phelps.

> Reviled, shamed, embarrassed and derided after the 7-1 demolition by Germany in the 2014 World Cup semi-final on home soil, Brazil recovered from the brink to claim a redemptive triumph

Pressure...Germany's Sven Bender goes close with a header against Brazil in the Final

Maracana hosted the Games' opening and closing ceremonies, but it was only full to its redeveloped rafters for the football Final. Neymar and his team-mates were so emotional after the medal presentations and their celebratory lap of honour that they could not bear to leave the pitch. The hero was still wandering around like a man in a daze even after most of his adoring fans had left the stadium.

Not that a happy ending appeared likely considering how Brazilians had started the competition. Placed in Group A, they began with two games in Brasilia followed by a third in Salvador for the right to head toward Rio.

Perhaps realising that Olympic failure had brought dismissals for previous

coaches Vanderlei Luxemburgo and Mano Menezes, new national boss Tite stepped aside to allow Rogerio Micale to take charge, and he was one of only a handful of coaches who took up the option of using all his permitted over-age players in what, for the men, is an under-23 tournament. Among those were keeper Weverton, who was called up for national duty for the first time and had a reputation for being a saver of penalties – a quality that would prove fortuitously decisive.

Partnering Neymar in attack were Manchester City-bound Gabriel Jesus, who was stationed in the centre, and on the right was the more muscular Gabriel Barbosa – nicknamed "Gabigol" – from Neymar's old club, Santos.

The tournament curtain-raiser saw ▸

Joy...on the winners' rostrum at last

Support...fans filled Maracana stadium for the Final

Relief...Neymar and Brazil coach Rogerio Micale

Iraq and Denmark play out an entertaining goalless draw before Brazil took on South Africa and struggled.

It was not that Brazil were short of effort; if anything they tried too hard. The crowd stuck with them until the second half before unleashing a storm of whistles and boos at the failure to put away a side who had been expected to be easy meat in a 0-0 draw. Those Brazilian fans had reckoned without the reflexes of Kaizer Chiefs goalkeeper Itumeleng Khune who proved unbeatable, even in the last half-hour after his side had been reduced to 10 men by the expulsion of defender Mothobi Mvala.

A second goalless draw for the hosts, this time against Iraq, was much the same story. More effort than skill, more desperation than creativity, again the crowd stuck it out until half-time before turning on the players. More jeers were mixed with chants demanding that the star of the women's side, Marta, be introduced as a substitute.

It was in the wake of this grim evening that a picture appeared of an angry fan who had crossed out Neymar's name on his Brazilian team shirt and written "Marta".

Denmark therefore went top after beating South Africa 1-0, thanks to a second-half goal from substitute Robert Skov and some fine goalkeeping from Jeppe Hojbjerg. But with club calls leaving the Danes with something of a makeshift squad, Brazil finally found their goal touch and beat them 4-0 with goals from Gabriel Barbosa (two), Gabriel Jesus and Luan.

However, the failure of either Iraq or South Africa to win the other tie in the group, which ended 1-1, sent both teams home and put Denmark through to the quarter-finals in second place.

In group B, the 1996 champions Nigeria dominated despite having to shrug off jet

Lessons from Brazil's triumph

by Tim Vickery

Apart from a much needed ego boost, what did Brazil get from finally winning the Olympic gold medal?

"The champion is back," roared a huge crowd in a deafening Maracana stadium. In the cold and wet of the following morning, it seemed something of an exaggerated reaction to a penalty shoot-out victory against, as the ever-wise Tostao pointed out, "a Germany who did not bring a single player from their Euros squad and who are without several of their best under-23 players".

Some have called for Brazil's young front line to be promoted immediately to the senior team. Writing before the Final, Tostao argued the emergence of Luan, Gabriel Barbosa and Gabriel Jesus "showed that Brazil still produce a lot of talented players. Will this crop soon prove themselves as good, better or worse than the likes of Douglas Costa, Phillippe Coutinho and Willian, who are doing well with big clubs and are always called up to the senior squad?"

The answer supplied by the gold-medal match against the Germans was that the new breed still have a long way to go.

Essentially, the story of the Final was of their failure. The Germans probably had more clear cut chances, even

Move...Renato Augusto dropped deeper

though Brazil controlled most of the game. This is largely because so many promising situations for Brazil did not lead to shots on goal. The Germans defended well, but Brazil's young strikers made it easier for them. Time and time again the German defence appeared to have been split, only for the Brazilians to waste their chance.

Rather than any individual promise from their young players, the main progress made by Brazil in this competition was collective. Their first two games were truly appalling – and then came the vital switch as 4-3-3 was abandoned. It left acres of space

Decisive...Weverton saves Nils Petersen's spot-kick in the Final

The major surprise of the group stage was the exit of 2012 gold medallists Mexico in Group C

lag following their late arrival after flight-payment problems for a thrilling 5-4 opening win over Japan in Manaus thanks to a four-goal show from Oghenekaro Etebo, from Portuguese side Feirense.

By comparison, Colombia's 2-2 draw with Sweden seemed pretty tame stuff, and it was no surprise when the Swedes succumbed next time out, losing 1-0 to Nigeria, who thereby sealed their quarter-final place with a game to spare. With captain John Obi Mikel in controlling form in midfield, Umar Sadiq headed the only goal of the game.

Second spot was left wide open after Colombia were held 2-2 again, this time by Japan who hit back from two goals down thanks to second-half strikes from Arsenal-bound Takuma Asano and Shoya Nakajima.

Colombia's good fortune was that Nigeria, with progress now assured, took their foot off the pedal in Sao Paulo. A first-half strike by Sporting's Teofilo Gutierrez and second-half penalty from Dorlan Pabon ensured the South Americans joined their West African opponents in the quarter-finals with a 2-0 victory.

The major surprise of the group stage was the exit of 2012 gold medallists Mexico in Group C, where they failed to heed the warning lessons of an opening 2-2 draw against Germany.

South Korea, bronze medal winners in London, seized initial top spot in the table when a Ryu Seung-woo hat-trick spearheaded an 8-0 thrashing of Fiji. The outclassed newcomers crashed 5-1 next time out to Mexico – but only after enjoying a brief ascendancy and scoring the opening goal through Roy Krishna. Erick Gutierrez scored four times in the Mexicans' second-half revival.

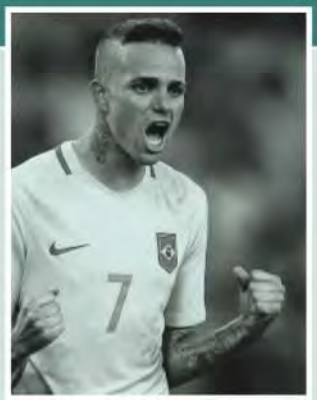
The second match in the Arena Fonte Nova proved a thriller as Germany and South Korea drew 3-3. Korea scored first, went 2-1 down then recovered to lead 3-2 with four minutes remaining. True to tradition, the Germans earned a point in stoppage time when Serge Gnabry claimed his second goal of the game with a deflected free-kick.

Heading into their last game, Korea and

Upset...Carlos Cisneros fails with a free-kick as Mexico lose to South Korea and go out

between the lines of the team. There was no fluidity, no passing moves. Midfielder Felipe Anderson was dropped, and in came Luan, an extra striker. Gabriel Barbosa stayed wide right, while Gabriel Jesus moved from centre-forward to wide left. Neymar moved infield to a position where he was in constant contact with the ball, and Luan slotted in alongside him, making a pair of false nines.

Now there was a link-up between midfield and attack. Either Neymar or Luan dropped to combine; sometimes both dropped, leaving space for the Gabriels to cut into the penalty area on the diagonal, which in turn left space for the full-backs to overlap. Midfielder Renato Augusto dropped a little deeper, filling a role where he did not have so much ground to cover. He was the team's organiser and Neymar's main supply line. And alongside him, Walace did the covering and marking. Brazil played four front players but still managed to retain a balance between attack and defence, helped by the pace of centre-back Marquinhos.



Talent...Luan came in as an extra striker

It is worth remembering that towards the end of 2012, shortly after the Final of the London Olympics, then-coach Mano Menezes hit on something similar: a system without an out-and-out centre-forward that looked something like a 4-2-4-0. At the very moment it seemed to be bearing fruit, Menezes was sacked and in came Luiz Felipe Scolari. The very first change that he made was the return of the target man centre-forward.

Four years on, it could be that Brazil are prepared to return to an experiment which was so frustratingly interrupted. And that is not the only thing that is going to change. As well as winning a title, Brazil have also lost a captain as Neymar said after the Germany game that he no longer wants the job. WS

Mexico were joint top with four points each, followed by Germany on a mere two. Germany, facing Fiji, were certain to reach five points, so the joint leaders knew only a win would ensure progress.

As it turned out, that victory went to the Koreans, who won 1-0 with a second-half strike from midfielder Kwon Chang-hoon. Germany joined them in the knockout stage after beating Fiji 10-0. Nils Petersen and Max Meyer helped themselves to five and three goals respectively, and Gnabry took his tally to five for the tournament with a first-half double.

Portugal, in Group D, celebrated their return to the Olympic finals for the first time in 12 years by securing a quarter-final place after just two games. First up they beat 2004 and 2008 champions Argentina 2-0 in the Olympic Stadium – formerly the Estadio Havelange in the Rio suburb of Engenhao – and they followed that with a 2-1 defeat of Honduras.

Argentina never recovered from that opening reverse and a 1-1 draw with Honduras in the final group game sent their opponents through.

Once through to the quarter-finals, and with Argentina and Mexico both out, Brazil were re-established as favourites – despite concerns over the fitness of Neymar. He picked up a muscle strain against Denmark but insisted he was fit and played his part

Impressive...South Africa goalkeeper Itumeleng Khune denies Gabriel Jesus

Treble...Germany's Max Meyer scored a hat-trick against Fiji

Hrubesch puts case for taking Olympics seriously

Some 24 years have passed since a European nation won Olympic football gold – and even on that occasion Spain were playing on home soil, in Barcelona.

When coach Horst Hrubesch noted – after ending his youth-coaching career with his players clutching silver medals – that Germany needed to take Games football more seriously in future, he might have been addressing European football in general.

The Olympics suffers because it is not a FIFA tournament and is therefore not slotted into the international calendar. Clubs can refuse to release players, as they did this time around, and that needs to change. Since the Olympics dates are fixed a full seven years in advance, that should not be a problem.

Hrubesch explained the "added value" of the Olympic football tournament in his summary after the Final, explaining that this was not merely one more youth tournament, the Olympic stage and set-up offered a unique learning experience.

The former Hamburg centre-forward and European Championship winner said: "When we came down to Rio from Salvador in the group stage, we considered staying as we usually do in a hotel. But then we thought we should make the most of the Olympic experience and stay in the Village, which was a great experience, mixing with people from other sports.

"It was a completely different experience from what we, as footballers, are used to and it was great. I hope they will take that experience to their clubs and the rest of their careers.

"I believe we represented German football very well and I think it makes sense that we take the Olympic football tournament very seriously in the future."

Keir Radnedge

Unique experience...Horst Hrubesch

Explosive...tempers flare in the game between Brazil and Colombia

in what proved to be an explosive clash with Colombia.

The Barcelona superstar had trained on his own the day before the game at the Estadio Corinthians but insisted he was fit enough to face the Colombians – with whom he had scores to settle. Crucially injured against them in the 2014 World Cup quarter-finals, he was then sent off in the duo's next duel, in the 2015 Copa America.

Tempers soon flared again as Gabriel Jesus was floored deep in the Colombian half and Neymar was then pushed to the ground. Once he had regained his feet, and squabbling players from both teams had been separated by the Turkish referee Cuneyt Cakir, Neymar took responsibility for the 13th-minute free-kick and fired it low through a porous defensive wall and beyond the right hand of diving goalkeeper Cristian Bonilla.

> Brazil were re-established as favourites – despite concerns over the fitness of Neymar

This only encouraged the Colombians to snap away all the more at Neymar. Five minutes before half-time, in retaliation, Neymar and two team-mates chased down Andres Roa and provoked a free-for-all which saw all the players and subs from both benches getting involved.

Once a fragile peace had been restored referee Cakir ticked off captains Neymar and Gutierrez, as well as the respective coaches, Micale and Carlos Restrepo. The heat then went out of the game and Brazil managed to sew things up with a fine late strike from Luan.

Elsewhere, Honduras scored a surprise 1-0 win over South Korea with a second-half breakaway goal from Alberth Elis to reach the Olympic semi-finals for the first time, while Nigeria had no trouble seeing off Denmark 2-0. Mikel and Aminu Umar scored either side of half-time to send the Nigerians through to Sao Paulo for a meeting with Germany, who had easily seen off Portugal 4-0.

German skipper Meyer of Schalke had been behind much of the Germans' most penetrative attacking work and he maintained his form in the semi-final by setting up Lukas Klostermann to score early against Nigeria. The goal was the left-back's first at any level for the national team, and substitute Petersen grabbed a late second on the counter-attack.

Germany were the favoured opposition for the Brazilians, who trounced Honduras 6-0 on their first appearance in Rio itself. Neymar struck twice, including the opening goal in an Olympic-record 15 seconds after catching the dawdling central defender Johnny Palacios in possession.

So to the Final and Brazil, having improved from game to game, were now confident enough to force the pace. They took the lead when Neymar curled a devastating free-kick over the wall, against the underside of Timo Horn's crossbar and down behind the line, and the explosion of joy in Maracana might have been heard in the 2020 Olympic host city of Tokyo.

But early in the second half the Brazilian defence fell invitingly open and Meyer swept home an equaliser. There were no more goals and with both teams having largely used their reserves of energy in a frenetic first hour, with more scares than clear opportunities, the game ran into extra time and on to penalties.

At the finale, keeper Weverton saved the Germans' fifth spot-kick from Petersen, and up stepped Neymar to write Brazil's name into Olympic football history and his own into legend. WS

Glenn Moore

Gold for Silvia

Germany triumph at Olympic Games in Rio

An intriguing competition, which often showcased the technical and tactical improvements in women's football, culminated in a golden farewell in Rio de Janeiro for Silvia Neid, who ended Pia Sundhage's bid for a third successive gold as the sport's most decorated female coaches and two of the game's pioneer nations finally reached an Olympic Final.

Germany, maintaining a long-time domination over Sweden, muzzled the underdog to win 2-1. All the goals came in the second half, with the gifted Dzsenifer Marozsan shaking off the injuries that have bedeviled her recent international career to make the difference. She curled in the opener from the edge of the 18-yard box, then delivered a free-kick that Linda Sembrant turned into her own goal after the ball came back off a post. Sweden quickly replied through Stina Blackstenius, but an equaliser was beyond them.

"I'm very happy about the one-and-a-half goals I was able to give to my team," said Marozsan, the daughter of a Hungarian international who moved to Germany to play for Saarbrucken when his daughter was young.

Victory completed the set for Neid. In 14 years as a German international, then 11 as national coach, she had won one World Cup and five European Championships, but never reached an Olympic Final. After winning one, the famously stern 52-year-old exuberantly joined in her team's jubilant celebration.

"What I felt was pure joy, because I know how hard we worked," said Neid, who now takes on a scouting role at the DFB, with Steffi Jones taking over as coach.

"I wanted to hand over a good team to Steffi. We are in very good shape now."

Indeed they are. Fourth at the 2015 World Cup, and with striker Celia Sasic, goalkeeper Nadine Angerer and midfielder Nadine Kessler having retired, some thought Germany might be in a period of transition. But if that's so, it has not lasted long, with the future looking as bright as the present.

Seven of the winning XI are under 26, including Almuth Schult, who was a solid replacement for Angerer, striker Alexandra Popp, whose touchline exchange with Canada coach John Herdman in the semi-final epitomised the team's refusal to take a backward step, and Marozsan. Sara Dabritz, who scored an excellent goal to kill off Canada in the semis, is 21, while Leonie Maier, whose forward run from full-back created Marozsan's opener in the Final, is 23.

Although disappointed to lose the Final, Sweden were happy at reaching it. "I feel we have won silver, not lost gold," said Sundhage, now in charge of her native country after steering USA to Olympic success in 2008 and 2012.

Such sentiment is understandable when you consider that Sweden were only in Brazil after winning a four-team play-off for the place Great Britain turned down and they were beaten 5-1 by the hosts in ▸

> "We played a bunch of cowards. The best team did not win today"
> USA keeper Hope Solo on losing to Sweden

Clash...Sweden's Olivia Schough (left) and Anja Mittag of Germany

Golden girls...Germany

a group game.

Unperturbed, the Swedes went through to the knockout stage and gained their revenge in the semi-finals, stunning Brazil in front of 70,454 spectators in the Maracana with a victory on penalties, ice-cool Lisa Dahlkvist converted the winning spot-kick.

Dahlkvist had also scored the winning penalty in a quarter-final shoot-out against the USA. Winners of four of the five previous events, the reigning Olympic and World Cup champions had never before failed to make it to the last four in either competition, and they did not go quietly.

Against the USA, Sweden often had all 10 outfielders behind the ball, as attacking players such as Lotta Schelin and Kosovare Asllani subjugated their instincts to keep the defensive shape. It worked so well they actually led through Blackstenius with 15 minutes left before Alex Morgan forced penalties. However, the United States' controversial goalkeeper Hope Solo was less than impressed and received a lengthy ban for describing the Swedes as playing "in a cowardly" fashion.

Local hero...Marta

Solo never seemed comfortable in Brazil, where locals booed and chanted "Zika, Zika, Zika" after she posted a photo on social media wearing a beekeeper's mask and holding insect repellent. Defeat to Sundhage, who has been critical of Solo since she stopped coaching the US – describing her as "the best goalkeeper" but also "challenging" and a "piece of work" – did not sit well.

"We played a bunch of cowards," Solo said. "The best team did not win today. They didn't want to open play. They didn't want to pass the ball. I think it was very cowardly. But they won. They're moving on, and we're going home.

Sundhage retorted: "I don't give a crap. I'm going to Rio, she's going home. It's OK to be a coward if you win." USA coach Jill Ellis observed: "To take us to penalty kicks is probably a good strategy because then it becomes a crapshoot, right?"

US team-mates Megan Rapinoe and Morgan disassociated themselves from Solo's remarks and, a week after the Olympics, the 35-year-old keeper was banned from the national team for six months. US Soccer president Sunil Gulati said the decision reflected Solo's failure to heed previous warnings about her "conduct". She responded by saying she was "saddened" by the ban but "could not be the player I am without being the person I am".

Brazil's run to the semi-finals had seen them set the competition alight, scoring three goals against China in addition to their five against Sweden, and they were one of the best supported Olympic competitors, eclipsed only by Neymar and his team-mates, their beach volleyball compatriots and Usain Bolt.

As well as attracting huge crowds their matches were widely viewed on television, bringing a new audience to a sport that has struggled for acceptance in an often macho culture. But despite the constant threat from the flank of the enduring Marta, the goals dried up as they played out three successive goalless draws before going out on penalties. To compound their disappointment they also missed out on bronze, losing 2-1 to Canada in the third-place match.

> "What I felt was pure joy, because I know how hard we worked"
>
> **Germany coach Silvia Neid on winning gold**

Having begun their tournament with a goal after 20 seconds from Janine Beckie against Australia, Canada topped their group by beating Germany 2-1. They followed that up by knocking out France, who underperformed yet again at a big tournament. However, a penalty conceded by the otherwise excellent Kadeisha Buchanan helped Germany to a 2-0 victory in the semis and provided the momentum for them to go all the way. **WS**

Talking Points

YOUNG TALENT
The emergence of young talent was one of the highlights of the Olympic tournament. Winners Germany had a youthful accent, while Canada look to have a bright future, with Ashley Lawrence, Kadeisha Buchanan, Deanne Rose, Janine Beckie and Jessie Fleming all impressing. Sweden's Stina Blackstenius is another name to remember. Not that is was all about youngsters. Formiga, at 38, was outstanding in Brazil's midfield, Hedvig Lindahl's goalkeeping took Sweden to the Final, and Golden Boot winner Melanie Behringer's five goals from midfield went a long way to ensuring German success.

Golden boot... Melanie Behringer

DEPTH
A sign of the growing depth of the women's game was the reduction in goalkeeping howlers and the absence of 10-0 scores. Zimbabwe took a couple of beatings but South Africa were respectable. Expect mounting pressure for the women's football in Tokyo 2020 to feature 16 teams, as in the men's competition.

ENGLAND/GB
One notable absentee was Great Britain. Resistance from the Scottish, Welsh and Northern Irish FA's, who fear a combined team would threaten their independent status within FIFA, meant the UK turned down the place won by England at the 2015 World Cup. England manager Mark Sampson said he believed his team "would have won the gold medal". They would certainly have been contenders, especially if bolstered by the likes of Scotland's Kim Little and Jess Fishlock of Wales. However, despite talk of fielding a team in Tokyo, football politics is likely to deny them.

Respectable... South Africa

REFEREES
The US and Sweden both had a goal wrongly disallowed during extra-time in the Final, and there was a ludicrous dismissal of New Zealand captain Abby Erceg early on, but generally the refereeing was better than at the World Cup, which was also entirely staffed with female officials. This augers well for the future.

Eyes on the prize...Brazil and Australia contest a quarter-final in Belo Horizonte

FOOTBALL 2017

OUT NOW!

AVAILABLE FROM YOUR LOCAL NEWSAGENT
OR DOWNLOAD TO YOUR TABLET

FROM THE MAKERS OF WorldSoccer

The Pep effect

Jonathan Wilson says Guardiola's impact at Manchester City has been immediate – and fascinating

Fascinating...Pep Guardiola will try to constantly tweak his Manchester City side

Perhaps Pep Guardiola's greatest quality as a manager is his willingness to change his side's style and formation according to circumstances and the opposition. He established a model of play at Barcelona – hard pressing and possession-based, rooted in the quick passing and mutual understanding fostered over years at La Masia – but then showed at Bayern Munich that he was willing to amend that.

And that's one of the reasons why his arrival in England is so fascinating.

Not only will there have to be tweaks to deal with the challenges presented by the Premier League, the volume of games will make it harder for him to make those changes between matches.

Last season, City played 59 games in all competitions while Bayern Munich played 53, but that's just part of the story. The Premier League is simply more physically demanding than the Bundesliga. As a rough measure of that, there are seven per cent more tackles in England than Germany, meaning more knocks, more attrition, more need for recovery. And that again has a twofold impact: it's hard to press with the same rigour and there's less preparation time between games because fatigued players can't be drilled in the same way.

Early attention on Guardiola at City focused on the goalkeeping situation, which is understandable. After all, if the England keeper isn't playing regularly, it has significant implications for the national team. Joe Hart is the biggest casualty of Guardiola's ruthless demand that his keeper, just as much as his team-mates, should be able to pass the ball.

But that thinking has also been carried into the shape of the rest of the side – which, in the long term, is likely to be more significant. In Guardiola's first Premier League game in charge, a 2-1 win over Sunderland, he started with a formation that initially seemed to be somewhere between a 4-1-4-1 and a 4-2-3-1. The initial surprise was David Silva appeared to be playing very deep, almost alongside Fernandinho. However, it soon became apparent that he was pushing up, and that he and Kevin De Bruyne were both operating as central creative midfielders who also worked back, as what De Bruyne described as "free eights".

That perhaps requires some explanation. In the form of 4-3-3 that emerged in Holland and Germany in the 1970s, and was eagerly adopted by Argentina, the midfield was made up of a holding player who would sit in front of the back four, an out-and-out creator at number 10, and a number eight who shuttled between the two.

The use of two central creators appears to be a growing trend. It was the idea that lay at the heart of Brendan Rodgers' success at Liverpool – brief as it was –

Role...Kevin De Bruyne says his position is as a "free eight"

with a 3-4-2-1 in which the "free eights", if that's what we're calling them, naturally gravitate into the awkward pockets left in a 4-2-3-1, wide of the holding midfielders but in front of and inside the full-backs. Even Jose Mourinho could argue that when he used Cesc Fabregas and Oscar in advance of Nemanja Matic at Chelsea in 2014-15 he was, in a slightly more reserved way, doing something similar.

For City, with Raheem Sterling and Nolito wide, that created a W-shape – and the structure does map that of the W-Ms that became the default in England between the late 1920s and the late 1950s. Although in England the wingers ended up dropping deeper as time went by, with one of the inside-forwards falling right back to become a bona fide midfielder, it's the structure that underpinned the pattern-weaving approach of the Scottish passing game, of which tradition Guardiola is the leading modern avatar. There's something almost unnerving about the thought that, physical development aside, the front end of Guardiola's City closely resembles the shape of Queen's Park in the 1890s.

The danger with committing two creators plus two wingers is the defensive deficit it could leave in midfield given the preference of modern full-backs for getting forward to support their winger. What Guardiola did at Bayern, and what he seems to be trying to do with City, is to cover that shortfall by having his full-backs play in an entirely different way.

Without the ball this season, City have operated a fairly orthodox back four, with the use of Aleksandar Kolarov as a central defender ahead of Eliaquim Mangala against Sunderland suggesting Guardiola's insistence on the capacity to pass. With the ball, though, Bacary Sagna and Gael Clichy have drifted infield into holding midfield roles – as Philipp Lahm and David Alaba often did with Bayern – with Fernandinho falling back to a position just in front of the two central defenders. The shape then becomes something akin to the W-M.

No system is perfect, of course, and the instinctive reaction is to wonder if there are sufficient players wide, whether City will be able to stretch the play against a side that sits deep and packs the centre against them, and whether they will be vulnerable to counter-attacks down the flanks. Less significantly, there's the issue of whether Ilkay Gundogan and Fernandinho will be able to play together when the former Borussia Dortmund midfielder has recovered from his knee injury.

> There's something almost unnerving about the thought that, physical development aside, the front end of Guardiola's City closely resembles the shape of Queen's Park in the 1890s

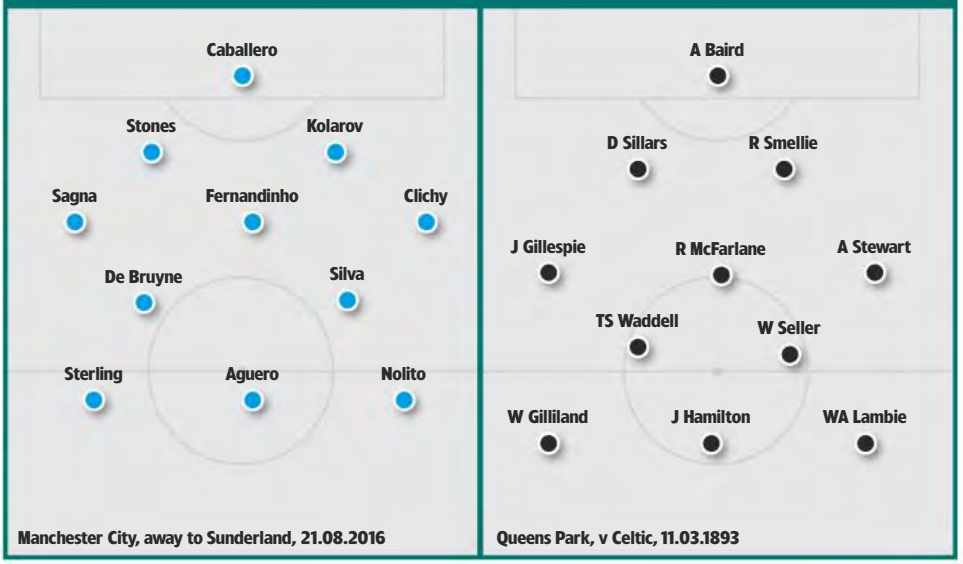
But already, Guardiola has had an impact. Already he is introducing shapes and patterns to the Premier League that, if they have been seen before, have not been for half a century or more.

There will be cynics who point out just how much City have spent this summer, but whatever their investment, the freshness of his imagination is clear. WS

Innovators...Queens Park in the 1890s

Wide...Raheem Sterling started the season well

CITY'S "FREE EIGHTS" COPY QUEENS PARK'S SUCCESSFUL CUP SIDE



adidas
CHEVROLET
MANCHESTER UNITED

United's humble superstar

Summer signing will stay grounded but have supporters on their feet, says Nick Bidwell

Not only did Manchester United land one of the most accomplished attacking midfielders in Europe when they signed Henrikh Mkhitaryan from Borussia Dortmund this summer, they also reeled in a humble sportsman who is dedicated to the game.

Just ask Ukrainian football journalist Oleksandr Sereda, who from 2009 to 2013 saw the Armenian jink, glide and maraud in the eastern city of Donetsk, initially with Metalurh and then with perennial champions Shakhtar.

"He's a very modest and decent guy," Sereda told the Munich-based sports website Spox. "Glamour is his enemy.

"At Shakhtar he used to live at the training complex. He didn't have a home in Donetsk and, as far as I'm aware, he didn't have a girlfriend either. The only thing which interested him was football.

"He's professional through and through. That's what Mircea Lucescu [Shakhtar's former long-serving coach] always used

Timeline

JAN 14, 2007
Makes his international debut for Armenia as a half-time substitute in a 1-1 draw with Panama in the USA.

MAR 28, 2009
Scores his first international goal, in a 2-2 World Cup qualifier at home to Estonia.

JUL 26, 2009
Scores his first league goal for Metalurh, in a 2-2 draw with Karpaty Lviv.

AUG 30, 2010
Plays his final match for Metalurh, a 2-1 win against Dnipro, before sealing a move across the city to Shakhtar.

to emphasise about him. Every coach wants players with such attributes."

Equally at home on the right wing, left wing or as a central playmaker, the 27-year-old can be sheer poetry in motion with his speed, grace, guile and vision. Yet for "Heno" – his Armenian *nom de plume* – natural ability has never been enough and he is driven by a never-ending cycle of objectives. He wants to make every drop of talent count, while studying, analysing and honing his skills. He is nothing short of being a round-ball obsessive.

As a schoolboy, he was so keen on emulating Zinedine Zidane that he would constantly watch the video of France's World Cup 98 triumph, while at Shakhtar he could often be found on the training ground out of hours, looking to improve his finishing and his free-kicks.

Perfectionism is second nature to him, and he can be especially hard on himself when he feels he has performed badly. He was inconsolable after missing several chances for Shakhtar against Chelsea in the Champions League in October 2012, despite his side's 2-1 victory.

"I'm very critical of myself," he said in an interview with Shakhtar's official website. "I know myself when I've played well and when I've not. I never accept praise if I know I've played badly. I chose to live at Kirsha [Shakhtar's training complex] because I wanted to concentrate more on training and matches than on living in Donetsk. My team-mates tease me about it, they call me the 'President of the Base'.

"I'm not a recluse. If I feel I need to get away from football, I go into the city to relax, then start the next day with a clear head. I never hide from people, from fans. I don't feel like a star or someone who is cool. I'm a normal man."

His astute positional play means he is able to operate in any number of tactical set-ups, with his quick thinking and clever runs into the box making him a constant danger for opposing defences.

Cerebral off the pitch as well as on it, he shone in the classroom, graduating from Armenia's State Institute of Physical Culture and studied Economics at the Yerevan branch of the St Petersburg Institute.

"He'd rather stay in and learn something than go out," his mother, Marina, told the German Football Association's website last year. "He's a workaholic."

For Lucescu, his mentor for three years at Shakhtar, Mkhitaryan simply was a football natural. "I first spotted him at the age of 17 when he was playing for Pyunik Yerevan against Shakhtar in a Champions League preliminary tie," says the Romanian coach who is now in charge at Zenit in Russia. "At the time Armenian players weren't in vogue. However, he had a good feel for the game, brought team-mates into play and created lots of chances.

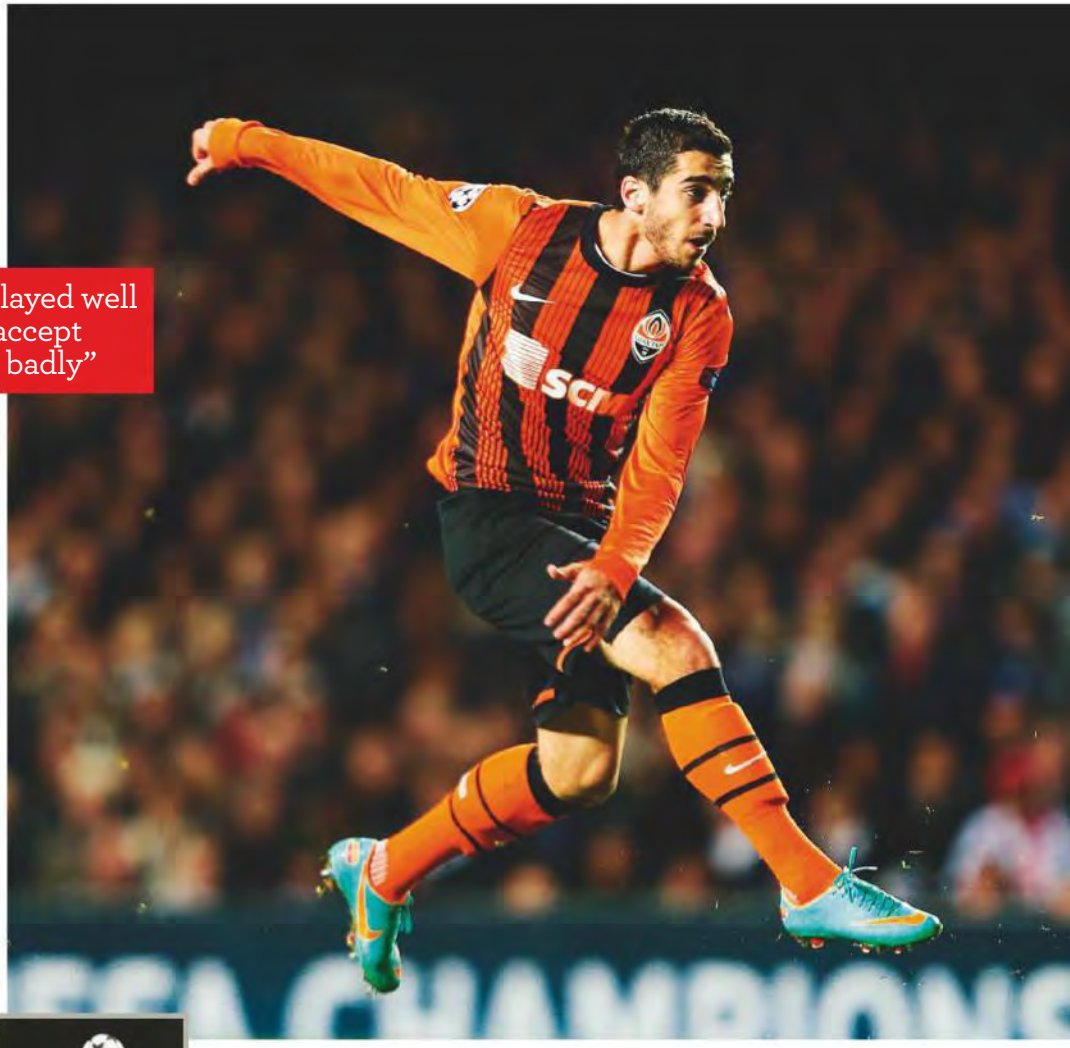
"He's a very clever player, someone who lives and breathes the sport."

Mkhitaryan's time at Shakhtar – where he won three Ukraine league and cup doubles – was pivotal to his development. With a regular diet of Champions League action to feast on, he toughened up physically, learned how to better channel his energies and picked up many a new tactical trick from the wily Lucescu.

The darling of the Donbass Arena crowd, Mkhitaryan's influence grew year on year, and in his final season with Shakhtar he was unstoppable at times, scoring 25 goals in 29 Ukraine Premier League appearances. "He's the player in our team who provides the acceleration," declared

Down to earth...in a testimonial game for United against Everton

> "I know myself when I've played well and when I've not. I never accept praise if I know I've played badly"



SEP 19, 2010
Scores his first goal for Shakhtar, in a 4-1 win against Tavriya.

SEP 28, 2010
Makes his Champions League debut as Shakhtar win 3-0 against Braga.

MAY 7, 2011
Comes on as a 68th-minute sub as Shakhtar clinch the league title with a 2-0 win against his old club, Metalurh.

MAY 10, 2012
Scores the second goal as Shakhtar win at home to Oleksandria on the last day of the season and do the double again.

AUG 19, 2012
Scores his first hat-trick for Shakhtar, in a 5-1 win away to Chornomorets in the league.

MAY 26, 2013
Finishes the season with 25 league goals as Shakhtar beat Metalurh 4-0 to secure a third title in a row.

Lucescu. Well, that and goals.

Genetics were in his favour too. His late father, Hamlet, was one of Armenia's best players, a star forward in the 1980s for Soviet league outfit Ararat Yerevan, who was second-top scorer with 18 goals in the 1984 USSR championship.

His father was also one of the first Soviet footballing emigres. In 1989, a few months after Henrikh was born, Hamlet was given permission to join French third-tier Valence – a city to the south of Lyon with a strong Armenian diaspora – and for the next five years the Mkhitaryan family made the Rhone corridor home.

Full of goals and the sort of stylish play the French adore, Hamlet Mkhitaryan inspired the Valentinois to promotion to the second tier in 1992. And it was not long before his son was imitating him, apparently hooked for good when his dad bought him his first boots and kit at the age of just three.

Success...he won three Ukrainian league and cup doubles with Shakhtar

"I used to watch my father play all the time and I always wanted to follow him to training," Henrikh told Shakhtar.com in 2012. "When he didn't take me, I'd stand by the door crying. I always wanted to be a footballer."

Marina says Hamlet loved nothing better than taking Heno to training, but that it often proved a distraction, with all the other players interrupting practice to play with the youngster.

"Little Henrikh always was to be found in the wake of his father," remembers Gilles Avakian, a family friend in Valence. "The child usually would have the ball at his feet and even though he was so small, you could see that he had control of it, that he was following the example of his father."

Tragedy, though, was waiting to pounce. Not long after moving on to play in the southern suburbs of Paris for Issy, Hamlet was diagnosed in 1995 with a brain tumour. Extensive treatment and three operations proved ineffective and, anxious to be close to their Armenian loved ones, the Mkhitaryans returned home, to the capital Yerevan, where Hamlet passed away in May 1996. He was only 33, with Henrikh just seven.

These were painful times for widowed Marina, Henrikh and his older sister Monika, but somehow they managed to regroup and move on. Marina found work at the Football Federation of Armenia – and is now a leading administrator – while Henrikh joined the schoolboy ranks of leading domestic outfit Pyunik, a club renowned for attracting the brightest and best youngsters in the country.

In every adolescent age category at Pyunik, the youngster was the one who invariably made the difference. At the age of 14 he enjoyed a dream field trip to South America after the club pulled strings for him to spend four months at top Brazilian club Sao Paulo, where he rubbed shoulders with future Brazil internationals Hernanes, Oscar and Lucas Moura, and learned to speak Portuguese – which would prove to be extremely useful seven years later when he lined up in a Shakhtar side featuring a host of Brazilian recruits.

Photo credit: Mediamax.am/Samwel Poghosyan

Genetic...his father, Hamlet (second left), was a prolific scorer for Ararat Yerevan

Photo credit: Mediamax.am/Marina Tashchyan

Family...with older sister, Monika

He made his first-team debut for Pyunik in September 2006 at the age of 17, in a game against Shirak, and needed only quarter of an hour to score his first Armenian league goal.

And much, much more was to come in Pyunik colours: four national championships, a domestic cup win and the nation's player of the year award in 2009, the first of five such accolades.

Many old acquaintances of his father could not believe their eyes on watching the youngster, who was displaying the same speed off the mark, dribbling skill and counter-attacking prowess.

Throughout 2009, rumours of Mkhitaryan's imminent departure grew. Reported interest from Lokomotiv Moscow and Dynamo Kiev failed to translate into anything concrete, while whispers of a swoop by Argentinian powerhouse Boca Juniors dissolved in the ether. After trials with Lyon, Marseille and Lille, he was even advised to try again when he was bigger and stronger.

Eventually, Pyunik would take the

JUL 8, 2013
Becomes Borussia Dortmund's most expensive signing when he joins the Bundesliga outfit for €27.5 million.

AUG 18, 2013
Makes his league debut for Dortmund in a 2-1 win against Eintracht Braunschweig.

SEP 1, 2013
Scores his first goals for Dortmund, in a 2-1 win away to Eintracht Frankfurt.

SEP 10, 2013
Captains Armenia for the first time, in a 1-0 defeat at home to Denmark in a World Cup qualifier.

matter into their own hands, selling him for €350,000 to Metalurh Donetsk, a Ukraine Premier League side with an Armenian owner. Despite being in a new land, and with much to learn, the 20-year-old newcomer was Metalurh's player of the season for 2009-10 and performed so impressively that he was appointed club captain.

The foundations had been laid, the reputation cemented, and by early August 2010 he was bound for the continental big time, heading across town to join Champions League activists Shakhtar in a €6million move.

Running parallel to his exploits at club level was a burgeoning international career. He was barely 18 when Armenia's then-coach Ian Porterfield awarded him his first full cap in a friendly against Andorra in February 2007 and he would go on to establish himself as a first-choice pick during the World Cup 2010 qualifying campaign.

> " 'Micki' is a courteous and humble character with tremendous talent. He needs to be appreciated for who he is"
> Borussia Dortmund coach Thomas Tuchel

But although he is now Armenia's all-time top goalscorer, his career has not always been one long victory parade. On occasion, self-doubt and dubious body language have held him back, and he has attracted adverse comment for the way he has forced through transfers.

His €27.5m switch from Shakhtar to Dortmund in 2013 was certainly a messy, controversial transaction, with Mkhitaryan fleeing to Vienna that summer and insisting that he wanted to play in a top European league. Shakhtar officials dug in their heels and general manager Sergei Palkin publicly criticised him for refusing to turn up for pre-season training.

What made the affair all the more complicated was that only half of his transfer rights belonged to Shakhtar, with former clubs Pyunik and Metalurh Donetsk each owning 25 per cent. And just to further tangle the web, the presidents of all three clubs wanted to sell him for a substantial profit to then Russian league big-spenders Anzhi.

Holed up in the Austrian capital, Mkhitaryan required heavy duty assistance, so he hired "superagent" Mino Raiola, the Italo-Dutch impresario that nobody ever seems to say no to. Butting heads, twisting arms and acting in alliance with the Dortmund club's CEO Hans-Joachim Watzke to cut through the legalese, Raiola broke the ice and eventually arranged a move to the Bundesliga

A similar scenario unfolded when the player left Dortmund for Old Trafford this summer. The German club initially intending to hold the Armenian to the final year of his contract until Raiola vociferously increased the pressure. "Henrikh is not the type who likes conflict," Raiola declared to German magazine *Sport-Bild*. "He leaves that to me."

Last season, Mkhitaryan was in dazzling form for Dortmund, creating no fewer than 20 Bundesliga goals, scoring 11 more himself and generally wreaking havoc with his finesse on the ball. But he was not always the idol of the Westfalenstadion.

In his first two years at the Ruhr club under coach Jurgen Klopp, he often struggled to come to terms with the team's frenetic playing style. He was on the receiving end of no little barracking from supporters and was planning to leave at the end of the 2014-15 campaign.

However, all that was to change when Thomas Tuchel took over from Klopp at the start of last season. Not only did Tuchel's possession-based game suit him better, the new coach knew exactly what to do to raise Mkhitaryan's spirits. He immediately made the Armenian feel wanted and worked on the player's mental approach, supposedly encouraging him to read Timothy Gallwey's sports psychology classic *The Inner Game of Tennis*.

" 'Micki' is a courteous and humble character with tremendous talent," said Tuchel. "He needs to be appreciated for who he is. I do have a soft spot for the way he plays. I love the vibes he gives off – the creativity, the sensitivity, the hint of the melancholic."

Handle with care, Jose. WS

High flier...in the thick of it for Borussia Dortmund against Werder Bremen towards the end of last season

Past...in his Metalurh Donetsk days

Threat...scoring against Liverpool last season in the Europa League

OCT 15, 2013
Becomes Armenia's all-time top scorer in international football with his 12th goal for his country, in a 3-1 defeat by Italy.

MAY 30, 2015
After a disappointing Bundesliga campaign, Dortmund lose in the Cup Final again, beaten 3-1 by Wolfsburg.

MAY 21, 2016
Disappointment in the German Cup Final for a third year running as Dortmund are beaten in a penalty shoot-out by Bayern Munich.

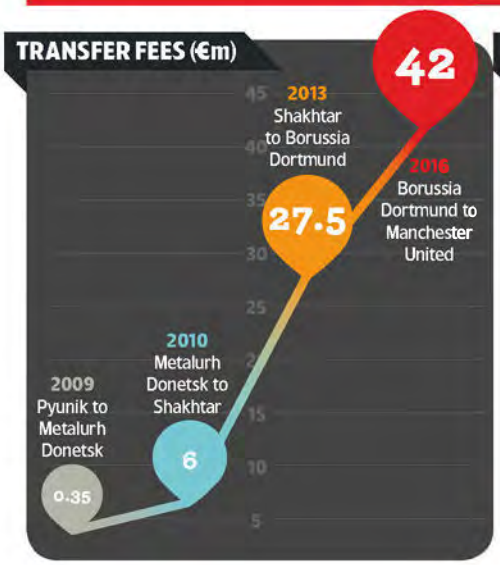
MAY 28, 2016
Scores his and Armenia's first-ever international hat-trick, in a 7-1 win against Guatemala in a friendly in Los Angeles, USA.

AUG 14, 2016
Makes his Premier League debut for Manchester United in the opening game of the season, in a 3-1 win away to Bournemouth.

Henrikh Mkhitaryan

the numbers game

TRANSFER FEES (€m)



ARMENIA

59
CAPS

GOALS
19

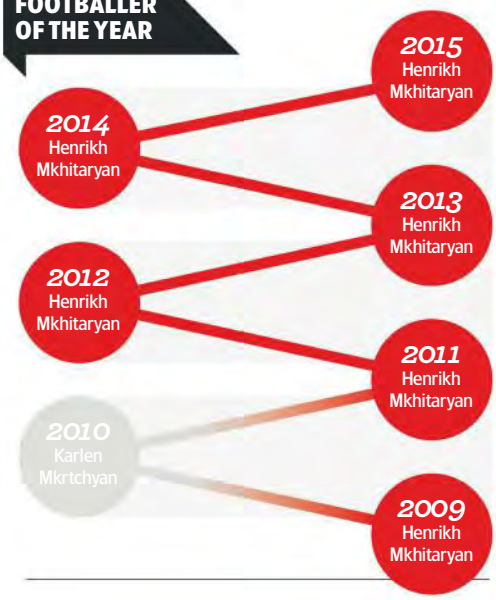
(*up to and inc 01.06.16)

ARMENIA'S ALL-TIME TOP SCORERS

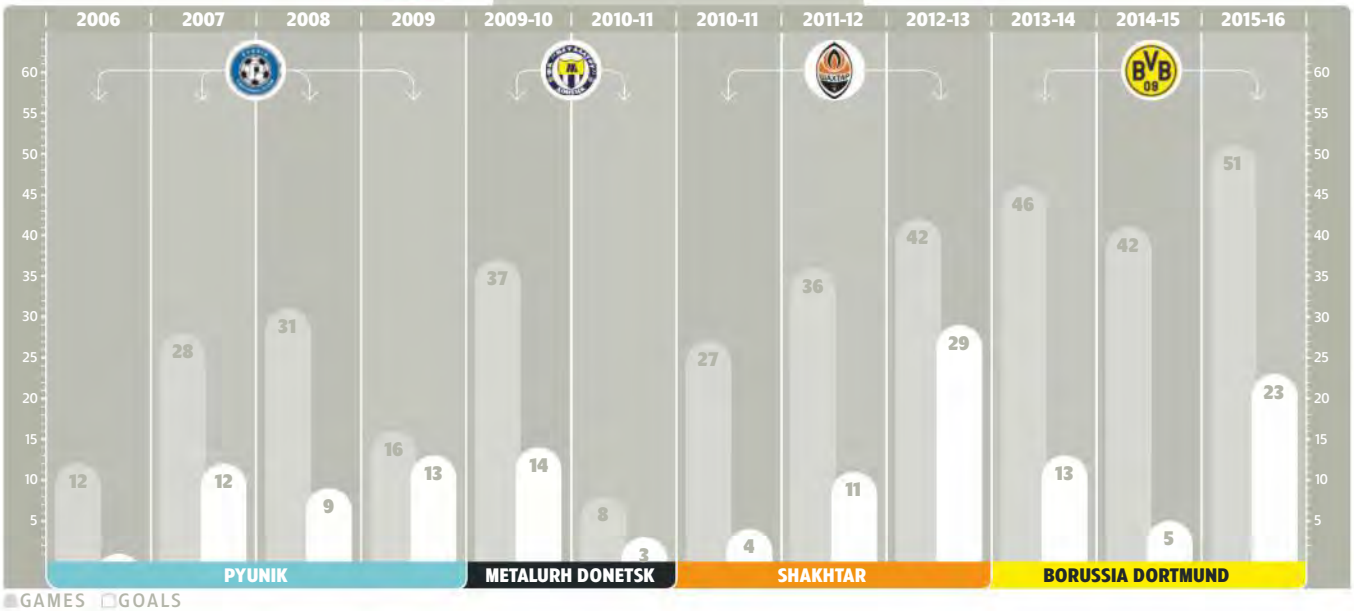
Henrikh Mkhitaryan	19
Artur Petrosyan	11
Yura Movsisyan	10
Gevorg Ghazaryan	9
Edgar Manucharyan	9
Marcos Pizzelli	8

6 languages that Mkhitaryan is fluent in: **Armenian, Russian, English, French, German, Portuguese**

ARMENIAN FOOTBALLER OF THE YEAR



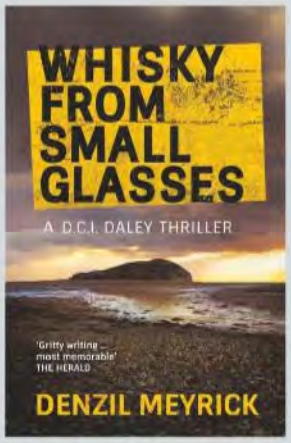
HONOURS



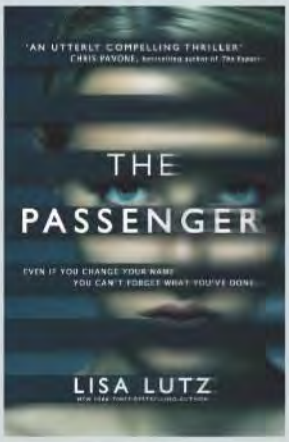
WorldSoccer

MONTHLY EXTRAS, EXCLUSIVE TO SUBSCRIBERS

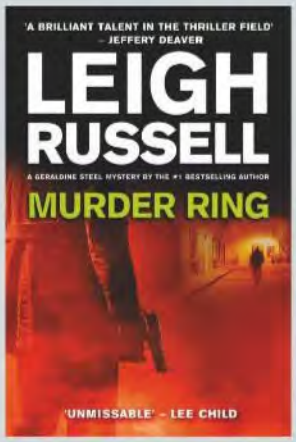
Rewards



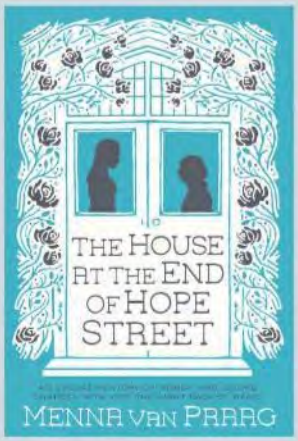
Polygon



TITAN BOOKS



NO EXIT PRESS



a&b

FREE digital book download, four amazing titles to choose from *

Join the Hotel Chocolat Tasting Club and try the introductory selection worth £22.95 for just £6.95

20% off EAST'S new Autumn collection

Join Rewards today and get even more from your magazine subscription at no extra cost. Enjoy exclusive handpicked offers and unique giveaways every month.

Redeem your rewards today at

worldsoccer.com/rewards

*Whisky From Small Glasses and The Passenger will be available between Friday 19 August and Wednesday 14 September 2016. Murder Ring and The House at the End of Hope Street will be available between Thursday 15 September and Wednesday 12 October 2016.The Rewards scheme is available for all active print subscribers of magazines published by Time Inc. (UK) Ltd, free of charge. Digital subscribers also get access, as long as the subscription has been purchased directly through the publishers at magazinesdirect.com. Full terms and conditions are available at mymagazinerewards.co.uk. For enquiries, contact help@magazinesdirect.com or call 0330 333 4333 (Lines are open Monday to Friday, 8:30am-5:30pm UK time, excluding Bank Holidays)

ESSENTIAL GUIDE

CHAMPIONS LEAGUE 2016-17

Analysis of every team in this year's tournament

50 FIXTURES
52 SIX PLAYERS TO WATCH

TEAM BY TEAM GUIDE

54 ARSENAL
60 ATLETICO MADRID
58 BARCELONA
55 BASLE
62 BAYER LEVERKUSEN
60 BAYERN MUNICH
56 BENFICA
57 BESIKTAS
64 BORUSSIA DORTMUND
59 BORUSSIA M'GLADBACH
59 CELTIC
67 CLUB BRUGGE
67 COPENHAGEN
62 CSKA MOSCOW
69 DINAMO ZAGREB
57 DYNAMO KIEV
68 JUVENTUS
66 LEICESTER CITY
65 LEGIA WARSAW
55 LUDOGORETS
69 LYON
58 MANCHESTER CITY
63 MONACO
56 NAPOLI
54 PARIS SAINT-GERMAIN
66 PORTO
61 PSV
64 REAL MADRID
61 ROSTOV
68 SEVILLA
65 SPORTING
63 TOTTENHAM HOTSPUR

EUROPA LEAGUE

70 FIXTURES
72 SIX PLAYERS TO WATCH
74 TEAM BY TEAM GUIDE

UEFA CHAMPIONS LEAGUE

Exciting... PSG's Lucas

GROUP A

SEP 13	PSG v Arsenal
	Basle v Ludogorets
SEP 28	Ludogorets v PSG
	Arsenal v Basle
OCT 19	Arsenal v Ludogorets
	PSG v Basle
NOV 1	Ludogorets v Arsenal
	Basle v PSG
NOV 23	Arsenal v PSG
	Ludogorets v Basle
DEC 6	PSG v Ludogorets
	Basle v Arsenal

Fanatical ...Benfica

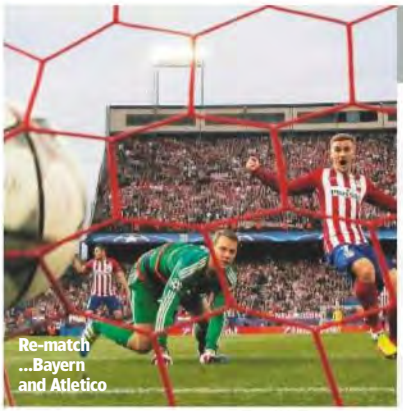
GROUP B

SEP 13	Dynamo Kiev v Napoli
	Benfica v Besiktas
SEP 28	Besiktas v Dynamo Kiev
	Napoli v Benfica
OCT 19	Napoli v Besiktas
	Dynamo Kiev v Benfica
NOV 1	Besiktas v Napoli
	Benfica v Dynamo Kiev
NOV 23	Napoli v Dynamo Kiev
	Besiktas v Benfica
DEC 6	Dynamo Kiev v Besiktas
	Benfica v Napoli

Old foes...Celtic and Barcelona

GROUP C

SEP 13	Barcelona v Celtic
	Manchester City v B M'gladbach
SEP 28	B M'gladbach v Barcelona
	Celtic v Manchester City
OCT 19	Celtic v B M'gladbach
	Barcelona v Manchester City
NOV 1	B M'gladbach v Celtic
	Manchester City v Barcelona
NOV 23	Celtic v Barcelona
	B M'gladbach v Manchester City
DEC 6	Barcelona v B M'gladbach
	Manchester City v Celtic


Re-match ...Bayern and Atletico

GROUP D

SEP 13	Bayern Munich v Rostov
	PSV v Atletico Madrid
SEP 28	Atletico Madrid v Bayern Munich
	Rostov v PSV
OCT 19	Rostov v Atletico Madrid
	Bayern Munich v PSV
NOV 1	Atletico Madrid v Rostov
	PSV v Bayern Munich
NOV 23	Rostov v Bayern Munich
	Atletico Madrid v PSV
DEC 6	Bayern Munich v Atletico Madrid
	PSV v Rostov

FIXTURES 2016-17

GROUP E

SEP 14	Bayer Leverkusen v CSKA Moscow
	Tottenham Hotspur v Monaco
SEP 27	Monaco v Bayer Leverkusen
	CSKA Moscow v Tottenham Hotspur
OCT 18	CSKA Moscow v Monaco
	Bayer Leverkusen v Tottenham Hotspur
NOV 2	Monaco v CSKA Moscow
	Tottenham Hotspur v Bayer Leverkusen
NOV 22	CSKA Moscow v Bayer Leverkusen
	Monaco v Tottenham Hotspur
DEC 7	Bayer Leverkusen v Monaco
	Tottenham Hotspur v CSKA Moscow

Head-to-head ...Monaco and Tottenham

GROUP F

SEP 14	Real Madrid v Sporting
	Legia Warsaw v B Dortmund
SEP 27	B Dortmund v Real Madrid
	Sporting v Legia Warsaw
OCT 18	Sporting v B Dortmund
	Real Madrid v Legia Warsaw
NOV 2	B Dortmund v Sporting
	Legia Warsaw v Real Madrid
NOV 22	Sporting v Real Madrid
	B Dortmund v Legia Warsaw
DEC 7	Real Madrid v B Dortmund
	Legia Warsaw v Sporting

Head over heels... Dortmund's Pierre-Emerick Aubameyang

GROUP G

SEP 14	Club Brugge v Leicester City
	Porto v Copenhagen
SEP 27	Copenhagen v Club Brugge
	Leicester City v Porto
OCT 18	Leicester City v Copenhagen
	Club Brugge v Porto
NOV 2	Copenhagen v Leicester City
	Porto v Club Brugge
NOV 22	Leicester City v Club Brugge
	Copenhagen v Porto
DEC 7	Club Brugge v Copenhagen
	Porto v Leicester City

Pumped up...Andre Silva of Porto

GROUP H

SEP 14	Lyon v Dinamo Zagreb
	Juventus v Sevilla
SEP 27	Sevilla v Lyon
	Dinamo Zagreb v Juventus
OCT 18	Dinamo Zagreb v Sevilla
	Lyon v Juventus
NOV 2	Sevilla v Dinamo Zagreb
	Juventus v Lyon
NOV 22	Dinamo Zagreb v Lyon
	Sevilla v Juventus
DEC 7	Lyon v Sevilla
	Juventus v Dinamo Zagreb

Opener... Juventus and Sevilla

6 of the best

Champions League starlets

Nick Bidwell highlights half a dozen young players to look out for in the group stage

1 Sardar AZMOUN

ROSTOV

Fifth in last season's player of the year ballot, the Iranian striker is one of the most impressive individuals in the Russian Premier League.

An explosive package of aerial ability, muscle, great touch and out-of-the-box thinking, the 21-year-old does not have countless opportunities to shine in his club's ultra-cautious, counter-attacking blueprint, but is sufficiently smart and opportunistic to make it work.

On the scoresheet in qualifying victories over Anderlecht and Ajax, the son of a prominent volleyball player began his career with Iranian side Sepahan before heading to Russia early in 2013 to join Rubin Kazan.

2 Bjorn ENGELS

CLUB BRUGGE

Outstanding homegrown centre-back who, after spending over a year on the sidelines with knee and ankle problems, played a vital role in his side's march to the Belgian league title last term.

Throughout the second-half of that campaign, he was a beacon of understated efficiency. Athletic and comfortable on the ball, he shows great calmness and maturity for a 21-year-old who has been on the club's book's since the age of 12.

A threat at the other end of the field too – recently heading home an injury-time equaliser in a 2-2 draw at home to Standard Liege – he would have gone with Belgium to Euro 2016 if an adductor muscle injury had not flared up.

3 Emre MOR

BORUSSIA DORTMUND

On a mission to stockpile as many young guns as possible, Dortmund pulled off a major coup in persuading Danish side Nordsjaelland to part with the Turk for just €7m.

Although small and slight, the teenage international winger's Messi-like dribbling skills, sudden changes of direction and sheer unpredictability render him as elusive as the breeze. When in full flow, he can leave any number of hapless markers in his wake.

Not that he was always so coveted. Growing up in Denmark, he had something of a problem child reputation and as recently as last year was virtually given away by Lyngby.

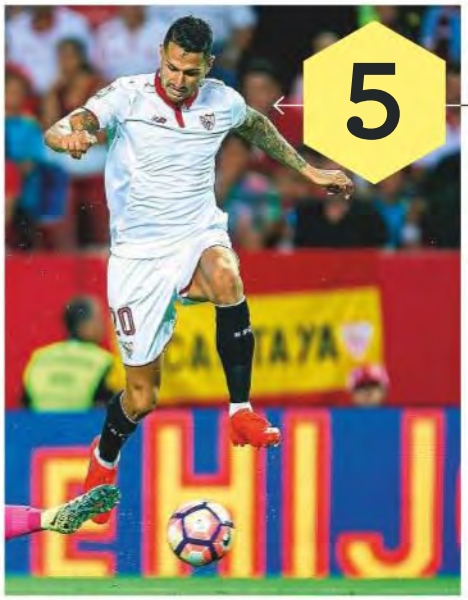
4 Djibril SIDIBE

MONACO

The right-back narrowly missed out on selection for Euro 2016, but was included in Didier Deschamps' first France squad of the new season.

Bought for €15m from Lille this summer, the 24-year-old native of the northern city of Troyes was heavily linked with Arsenal, but he turned them down after concluding that he risked too many games on the bench at the Emirates.

He perfectly fits the profile of the modern full-back: adventurous, quick, a good user of the ball and rugged and tenacious defensively. Used to be known as "The Tortoise' due to his poor heading.



5 VITOLO

SEVILLA

August 2016 was a highly satisfactory month for the winger who signed a new and improved contract to keep him at the Sanchez Pizjuan until 2020 and was recalled to the Spain fold by new coach Julen Lopetegui.

That Sevilla have increased his release clause from €25m to €40m and made him one of the team's four captains should come as no surprise.

For the past three seasons, ever since joining from Las Palmas, the 26-year-old has been one of the Andalucian outfit's most influential performers, a key factor in their hat-trick of Europa League crowns.

Busy and incisive, he is excellent in his decision-making.

6 Marko ROG

NAPOLI

One of three excellent midfield prospects to arrive at the Stadio San Paolo in the close season – the others being Amadou Diawara (Bologna and Guinea) and Piotr Zielinski (Udinese and Poland) – the 21-year-old Dinamo Zagreb starlet is arguably the best of the lot.

Oozing class and creativity, he can operate either centrally or out wide and is especially dangerous when surging forward from deep. His temperament was there for all to see at Euro 2016, filling in superbly for the injured Luka Modric in Croatia's group phase victory over Spain.

Napoli have him on loan, with a €12.5m move in the offing next year.

PARIS SAINT-GERMAIN

New coach in no doubt what's required of him

Mercurial...Hatem Ben Arfa was signed from Nice

The French champions are desperate for European success after losing to Manchester City in last season's Champions League quarter-finals.

● Defeat to Man City last season led to the removal of coach Laurent Blanc, so the stakes couldn't be higher for new boss Unai Emery, even though the group draw has been kind to PSG.

● Their summer recruitment hasn't been as stellar as in the past, but Spanish striker Jese, French forward Hatem Ben Arfa and Polish midfielder Grzegorz Krychowiak are decent. PSG have looked a little lightweight in previous European campaigns but Krychowiak will add a lot more steel.

● Without Zlatan Ibrahimovic, Uruguayan forward Edinson Cavani has the chance to lead the line and remind everyone why he was one of Europe's most coveted strikers three years ago.

● PSG have also gambled on Hatem Ben Arfa, who has had a chequered career. Emery has already questioned the 29-year-old's defensive capabilities.

Key players: Uruguayan forward Edinson Cavani; Polish defensive midfielder Grzegorz Krychowiak; mercurial talent Hatem Ben Arfa.

Stadium: The Parc des Princes (48,500) has been renovated by PSG's owners over the past three years, with new seats and improved commercial facilities.

● COACH

Spaniard Unai Emery moved to Paris this summer after three successive Europa League titles with Sevilla.

● TACTICS

Emery has plenty of options in his large squad but is likely to move away from Blanc's preferred 4-3-3 in favour of a more flexible 4-2-3-1. With Ibrahimovic gone, Cavani will finally get the chance to play in his preferred position of central striker. Emery has started with Javier Pastore as his playmaker and Angel Di Maria out on the flank as the team's main supply line. Marco Verratti is back to full fitness and been given the no10 shirt, and could be asked to play a more creative role.

STAR MAN

Marco VERRATTI

The 23-year-old Italian defensive midfielder is one of Europe's most underrated talents. He missed much of last season with injury and his aggressive nature and passing will be vital if PSG want to progress in Europe.

4-2-3-1

ARSENAL

Consistent without hitting the heights

Combative...Granit Xhaka will add midfield steel

The Gunners are competing in the Champions League for a 17th consecutive season, having reached the Final in 2006, when they lost to Barcelona.

● The summer months were dominated by Arsenal's search for a new striker, which ended with the signing of Spanish forward Lucas Perez from Deportivo after the club's failure to lure Jamie Vardy from Leicester City. Perez had been on the verge of joining Everton, but it remains to be seen whether he can make the step-up required for the Champions League.

● After complaining about the size of transfer fees, Arsene Wenger paid Valencia £35m for German international centre-back Shkodran Mustafi and £30m to Borussia Monchengladbach for Swiss midfielder Granit Xhaka.

● Arsenal were beaten by familiar foes Barcelona last season in the round of 16. They have reached the knockout stage every year since 2003 but last reached the quarter-finals in 2010.

Key players: Combative midfielder Granit Xhaka; playmaker Mesut Ozil; centre-forward Olivier Giroud.

Stadium: Now 10 years old, Emirates Stadium (60,400) has excellent sightlines but critics point to a sterile atmosphere.

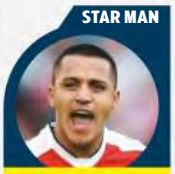
● MANAGER

Arsene Wenger is about to celebrate his 20th anniversary in charge of Arsenal, having arrived from Grampus Eight in September 1996.

● TACTICS

Arsenal never deviate from the patient passing game favoured by Wenger even though they are often accused of "over-playing" in their search for excellence. The signing of Xhaka gives the manager multiple options in midfield, where Francis Coquelin and Mohamed Elneny are alternatives for defensive duties, with Jack Wilshere having joined Bournemouth on loan. Alexis Sanchez can play up front, as can new signing Perez while Theo Walcott, Alex Oxlade-Chamberlain and Alex Iwobi are other attacking alternatives from the flanks.

STAR MAN



Alexis SANCHEZ

Used by Wenger in the past as a centre-forward but has been most effective as a wide attacker since arriving from Barcelona in 2014. He won the Copa America again this summer with Chile and is contracted to Arsenal until 2018.

4-2-3-1

BASLE

Cosmopolitan side with a point to prove

Newcomer...Blas Riveros will challenge for a place

The *Rot-Blau* are embarking on their seventh Champions League campaign and feel they have a point to prove after being eliminated in the play-off round last time out by Maccabi Tel Aviv.

● Swiss Super League winners for the last seven years, FCB's squad has never been more cosmopolitan, with players from 16 countries, including 10 European nations as well as South Americans and Africans. All of which leaves coach Urs Fischer with a big communication problem.

● As usual, Basle recruited far and wide this summer, headhunting Paraguayan left-back Blas Riveros (Olimpia), Colombian central defender Eder Balanta (River Plate), Norwegian midfielder Mohamed Elyounoussi (Molde) and Ivorian striker Seydou Doumbia (Roma, on loan).

● Nothing, however, could be done to prevent teen sensation centre-forward Breel Embolo leaving for Schalke in Germany. They also lost a great deal of experience at the back, with Argentinian stopper Walter Samuel retiring and full-back Behrang Safari moving to Malmo.

● Cynics argue, with some justification, that Basle's reserve side could top the Swiss league and the lack of domestic intensity leaves them ill-prepared for the sterner stuff in the Champions League.

Key players: Dynamic Icelandic midfielder Birkir Bjarnason; skipper and creator-in chief Matias Delgado; solid Czech centre-back Marek Suchy.

Stadium: St Jakob Park (37,500), which is the largest football venue in Switzerland, is more commonly known as "Joggeli".

● COACH

Urs Fischer took over from Paulo Sousa in July last year and won the league in his first season in charge.

● TACTICS

Fischer's base formation is a 4-2-3-1, which turns into a 4-4-2 when in defensive mode. He likes his side to play with an adventurous, style, with the emphasis on penetration in wide areas. The coach rotates his personnel extensively, especially in midfield and on the flanks.

STAR MAN

Seydou DOUMBIA

On a season-long loan from Roma, he has plenty of previous Champions League experience from his days with CSKA Moscow. Had a disappointing time at Newcastle earlier this year, making just three appearances, all as a sub.

4-2-2-2

LUDOGORETS

Owner's dream may have to wait

Hero...Cosmin Moti has a stand named after him

The Bulgarian champions are taking part in the Champions League group stage for the second time, having first appeared at this stage in 2014.

● Ludogorets, Bulgarian champions for the past six seasons, are back in the group stage of the Champions League after missing out last year, when they were surprisingly beaten in the second qualifying round by Moldova's Milsami.

● Ludogorets hope to repeat their debut in 2014 when – despite being in a group with Real Madrid, Liverpool and Basle – they finished with four points, all taken from the games against the Swiss.

● Ludogorets took their place in the group stage after eliminating Czech champions Viktoria Plzen 2-0 at home and 2-2 away in the play-off round.

● Club owner Kiril Domuschiev, one of Bulgaria's richest oligarchs, has great plans for the club and dreams of seeing his club reach the round of 16.

● The main summer transfers were Ukrainian defender Igor Plastun (Karpati), Argentina defender Jose Palomino (Metz) and Brazilian midfielder Gustavo Campagnaro (Evian).

Key players: Bulgarian midfielder and captain Svetoslav Dyakov; Romanian central defender Cosmin Moti; Brazilian striker Wanderson.

Stadium: Ludogorets will play their group games at Vassil Levski in Sofia (43,000) because their owns Ludogorets Arena in Razgrad doesn't have a licence.

● COACH

Georgi Dermendjiev is currently in his second spell in charge of the club.

● TACTICS

Dermendjiev's line-up against Viktoria in the play-off round was nothing if not multi-national, containing five Brazilians, three Bulgarians, one Romanian, a Dutchman and an Argentinian. In attack, they rely on Virgil Misidjan of Holland and the Brazilian duo Wanderson and Jonathan Cafu. Madagascar midfielder Abel Anice has missed out through injury.

STAR MAN

MARCELINO

The attacking midfielder is the real brains of the team, co-ordinating play and scoring important goals. A naturalised Bulgarian who made his debut for the national side earlier this year, he has won five Bulgarian league titles.

4-3-3

BENFICA

Confident despite departures

Defensive...midfielder Ljubomir Fejsa

The 1961 and 1962 European champions ran Bayern Munich close in last season's quarter-finals.

● Portugal's most decorated club have been league champions for the past three years. They retained their title last term and reached the last eight of the Champions League quarter-finals before narrowly losing to Bayern Munich after a 2-2 draw in Germany. That was despite changing coach in summer 2015, when Jorge Jesus jumped ship.

● This season, they are again confident of success despite the summer departures of midfielder Nicolas Gaitan (Atletico Madrid) and teenage sensation Renato Sanches (Bayern). Brazilian forward Talisca, scorer of a spectacular goal against Bayern, has gone on loan to Besiktas.

● Despite the big-money sales, which have totalled more than €300m over the past six years, Benfica continue to unearth new talent. Summer arrivals included Euro 2016 winner Rafa Silva (Braga), highly-rated youngster Andre Horta (Setubal) and exciting Serbian midfielder Andrija Zivkovic (Partizan Belgrade), as well as Argentinians midfielders Oscar Benitez (Lanus) and Franco Cervi (Rosario) and Colombian midfielder Guillermo Celis (Junior).

Key players: Serbian midfielder Ljubomir Fejsa; central defender Jardel; Mexican striker Raul Jimenez.

Stadium: The largest football ground in Portugal, the Estadio da Luz (65,600) was opened in 2003 and built on the site of the original stadium.

● COACH

Rui Vitoria took charge last summer following Jorge Jesus' move across town to Benfica's arch-rivals Sporting. He had previously won the Portuguese Cup with Vitoria Guimaraes.

● TACTICS

Under Vitoria, Benfica have moved away from their previous 4-2-3-1 set up to a 4-4-2. Jonas and Greek international Konstantinos Mitroglu are the preferred front pair, with Mexico's Raul Jimenez in the role of supersub.

STAR MAN

JONAS

In the form of his life since arriving from Valencia in 2014, he scored 36 goals in 48 games last season. However, the Brazilian was labelled "the worst striker in the world" in his homeland after one particularly poor Libertadores Cup game for Gremio.

4-4-2

Promising...Polish striker Arkadiusz Milik

NAPOLI

Time for class to tell

The Serie A runners-up may have lost striker Gonzalo Higuain to Juventus but they have enough class to finally make progress in the Champions League.

● Napoli's summer was dominated by the sale of Argentinian centre-forward Higuain to Juventus. Fans were furious at the departure of last season's top scorer in Serie A, but there was little the club could do after Juventus triggered the hefty €90m release clause in his contract.

● Last season's Serie A runners-up were able to re-invest the Higuain cash on a string of promising players, headed by Polish striker Arkadiusz Milik (Ajax), midfielders Piotr Zielinksi (Udinese) Amadou Diawara (Bologna) and Marko Rog (Dinamo Zagreb), as well as Italy international Emanuele Giaccherini (Sunderland) and defender Lorenzo Tonelli (Empoli).

● Napoli do not have a great record in the Champions League. They are competing in the group stage for only the third time, and failed to get beyond the second round of the old Champions Cup format in 1988 and 1991 when Diego Maradona inspired them to the Italian title. But their new signings – and a decent draw – give them genuine hope.

Key players: Polish forward Arkadiusz Milik; Belgian winger Dries Mertens; Senegalese defender Kalidou Koulibaly.

Stadium: San Paulo (62,240) is the third largest football ground in Italy, after Milan's San Siro and Rome's Stadio Olimpico.

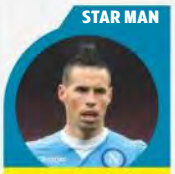
● COACH

Naples-born Maurizio Sarri joined from Empoli in the summer of 2015 and excelled during his first season in charge at the San Paulo

● TACTICS

Sarri has moved away from the 3-5-2 favoured by predecessor Walter Mazarri, who is now with Watford, and has multiple options in midfield. Going with a 4-3-3 could see Italy internationals Lorenzo Insigne and Manolo Gabbiadini edged out by Milik, although Sarri could choose to switch to a 4-4-2.

STAR MAN



Marek HAMSIK

Signed a new four-year deal with the club in August despite interest from bigger clubs following his performance at the summer's Euro finals. He is now third on the club's all-time appearance list with over 400 games.

4-3-3

DYNAMO KIEV

Top of the tree in Ukraine once again

Intelligent...midfielder holder Serhiy Rybalka

The balance of power in Ukraine football has shifted, with Dynamo replacing Shakhtar Donetsk as the dominant domestic force and standard-bearer in the European higher echelons.

● Domestic champions for the last two seasons, Dynamo pipped Porto to second spot in their Champions League group last term before exiting in the round of 16 to Manchester City. They had not progressed that far in the competition since 1999.

● Three of their foreign legion left in the close season, with Portuguese holding midfielder Miguel Veloso returning to Genoa on a free, Polish striker Lukasz Teodorczyk beginning a loan spell at Anderlecht, and Austria centre-back Aleksander Dragovic joining Bayer Leverkusen. The Dragovic saga was an interminable soap opera, with Dynamo demanding €22m and Leverkusen looking to haggle before the pair finally agreed on a fee of €18m.

● Their only newcomer of note is 29-year-old Ukraine international forward, Olexandr Gladkiy, who was brought in as a free agent from Shakhtar. He was the first player to move between Ukraine's big two since current Dynamo coach Serhiy Rebrov did so in 1992.

Key players: Excellent engine room all-rounder Denys Garmash; sharp Brazilian front man Junior Moraes; intelligent midfield holder Serhiy Rybalka.

Stadium: Although it is not their official home, Dynamo play their European games at NSC Olimpiyskiy Stadium (83,000).

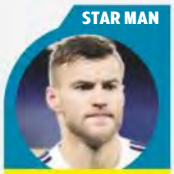
● COACH

Former international striker Serhiy Rebrov took charge in April 2014.

● TACTICS

In Rebrov's 4-1-4-1 system the fundamentals are to keep a compact shape, play with controlled aggression in all areas and turn defence into attack as quickly as possible. The deep-lying Rybalka pulls the strings in possession, while headliner Yarmolenko shuttles backwards and forwards, inside and out, to make things happen.

STAR MAN



Andriy YARMOLENKO

Dazzling 26-year-old who some might say is running out of time to make a big-money move to the West. Born in Russia but brought up in his parents' homeland, he has been Ukrainian player of the year three times in a row.

4-1-4-1

BESIKTAS

Change of style in Europe?

Solid...Canadian international Atiba Hutchinson

Re-admitted to the European main event for the first time in six years, the Black Eagles have never qualified for the knock-out stage.

● Back in May, the Istanbul side became Turkish champions for a 14th time, ending a seven-year wait for Super Lig gold.

● The failed coup in Turkey this summer could not have happened at a worse time for Besiktas, with the unstable situation resulting in the exit of two of their most important attacking-third players. German striker Mario Gomez decided not to turn his loan stint from Fiorentina into a longer-lasting arrangement, while Argentinian playmaker Jose Sosa kicked up enough fuss to force a move to Milan. Another potentially damaging departure was that of winger Gokhan Tore, who sealed a one-year loan switch to West Ham United in the Premier League.

● For a team preparing to face tougher challenges, a low-key recruitment drive has not satisfied the fans. Newcomers include the experienced ex-Barcelona left-back Adriano, Turkey right-back, Gokhan Gonul (Fenerbahce) and Brazilian attacking midfielder Talisca on loan from Benfica.

● Defensively they are not of the strongest, particularly underwhelming in the goalkeeping and central defensive departments. Without Gomez, it's hard to see where the goals will come from.

Key players: Defensive midfielder Atiba Hutchinson; creator Oguzhan Ozyakup; incisive left-flank operator Olcay Sahan.

Stadium: The swanky new Vodafone Arena (42,000) was erected on the site of the club's famous old Inonu Stadium.

● COACH

An unforgettable campaign for veteran coach Senol Gunes last term saw him finally become a league winner after 28 years of trying.

● TACTICS

The coach likes his teams on the front foot, dominating possession with tempo and width. But he can adopt a more cautious approach when the stakes are high and may play this way in Europe.

STAR MAN

Ricardo QUARESMA

The Portuguese winger can be somewhat hit-or-miss, but if on song he can unlock any defence. Full of confidence after winning the European Championship in France this summer.

4-2-3-1

BARCELONA

Catalans look stronger than ever

Golden boot...Luis Suarez was La Liga's top scorer

The five-times European champions went out of the Champions League to Atletico Madrid in last season's quarter-finals but have strengthened with summer signings.

● A reunion with former coach Pep Guardiola will hog the headlines ahead of the group games with Manchester City, but Barca will be looking ahead to the knockout stage – where they will expect to go further than last season.

● European champions in 1992, 2006, 2009, 2011 and 2015, they remain on a high after last term's domestic double, when Luis Suarez broke the duopoly of Lionel Messi and Cristiano Ronaldo to finish as La Liga's top scorer and the ESM Golden Shoe winner.

● This summer's new arrivals include striker Paco Alcacer (Valencia, €30m), Dutch goalkeeper Jasper Cillessen (Ajax, €13m), Portuguese Euro-winning midfielder Andre Gomes (Valencia, €35m), French defenders Lucas Digne (Paris Saint-Germain, €16.5m) and Samuel Umtiti (Lyon, €25m), and former Barca B midfielder Denis Suarez (Villarreal, €3m).

● Departures included keeper Claudio Bravo to Manchester City but there were no takers for Turkish midfielder Arda Turan.

Key players: Midfield pivot Sergio Busquets; club captain Andres Iniesta; last season's Pichichi winner Luis Suarez.

Stadium: Camp Nou (99,350) is Spain's largest football stadium and there are plans to expand it to 105,000 with a revamp which starts next year.

● COACH

Luis Enrique was appointed in May 2014 after a season in charge of Celta Vigo, having previously had spells at Roma and with Barcelona B.

● TACTICS

Barca's base formation never changes and the 4-3-3 formation will be spearheaded by the MSN frontline of Messi, Suarez and Neymar. The new signings have brought competition for places. Umtiti could find a place in central defence; Gomes or Suarez could come in for Iniesta or Ivan Rakitic; Digne could replace Jordi Alba.

STAR MAN

Lionel MESSI

Complete with new bleach-blond hair, he had a busy summer, quitting international football after losing the Copa Centenario Final on penalties to Chile, only to return weeks later in time for Argentina's September round of World Cup qualifiers.

4-3-3

MANCHESTER CITY

Pep will be expected to take them to a new level

Pivot...Fernandinho is increasingly important

After reaching the Champions League semi-finals for the first time last term, City are targeting further success under a new boss.

● City lost their way under Manuel Pellegrini last season, finishing fourth in the Premier League, but have been reinvigorated by Pep Guardiola.

● Already the signs are there that City are being revolutionised by Guardiola, with Joe Hart and Yaya Toure not needed, and players such as Raheem Sterling revitalised.

● City spent more than £150m to back Guardiola, with new signings including Chilean keeper Claudio Bravo, English centre-back John Stones, German midfielders Ilkay Gundogan and Leroy Sane, and Spanish forward Nolito.

● Guardiola has taken tough decisions, dropping England keeper Hart because of poor distribution with his feet and bringing in Bravo. Toure's future remains uncertain, while captain Vincent Kompany has yet to feature after being out through injury.

Key players: Belgian ace Kevin De Bruyne; Brazilian defensive pivot Fernandinho; Spanish attacking midfielder David Silva.

Stadium: The City of Manchester Stadium (53,000) is also known by the name of sponsors Etihad.

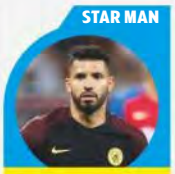
● MANAGER

Pep Guardiola, who spent four years as coach of group opponents Barcelona, arrived on a three-year contract this summer after winning three successive Bundesliga titles with Bayern Munich.

● TACTICS

Under Guardiola, City have nominally played a 4-1-4-1, but there is huge flexibility, with the coach making changes every game. Already, the full-backs have been used in central midfeld, allowing the wingers to push up and press the opposition full-backs, while a single defensive midfielder, Fernandinho, allows for two midfield playmakers, David Silva and Kevin De Bruyne, to prompt the attacking initiatives. Ilkay Gundogan will be in contention when fit.

STAR MAN



Sergio AGUERO

His goals have been crucial to City's rise to the top over the five seasons and the Argentinian striker's absence through injury for much of last autumn hindered his side's domestic title challenge last term.

4-1-4-1

BORUSSIA MONCHENGLADBACH

Coach under pressure to improve away form

New... Jannik Vestergaard arrived from Bremen

Gladbach are taking part in their second consecutive Champions League group phase – which is a welcome return to the spotlight after 37 years in absentia.

● The Foals effected a remarkable turnaround in last season's Bundesliga. Rock bottom in September after losing their first five matches, Andre Schubert replaced Lucien Favre as coach and inspired a rapid recovery leading them to fourth spot. They thumped Young Boys of Berne in the play-off round.

● Two of their most influential leaders left this summer as Norwegian defender Havard Nordveit joined West Ham United as a free agent and midfield controller Granit Xhaka went to Arsenal in a big-money deal.

● General manager Max Eberl is a sharp transfer-market operator and has brought in Werder Bremen and Denmark centre-back Jannik Vestergaard, Hoffenheim utility man Tobias Strobl and Christoph Kramer, who rejoined from Bayer Leverkusen to fill the Xhaka gap.

● As with all attack-minded sides, they can get carried away and leave the back door open. Last term they were not nearly so effective on the road

Key players: The spine of Swiss keeper Yann Sommer; Danish central defender Andreas Christensen; midfield marauder Mo Dahoud; mobile front man Lars Stindl.

Stadium: Borussia Park (46,249) is an atmospheric ground located on a road named after Hennes Weisweiler, the club's most successful-ever coach.

● COACH

Despite an excellent 12 months in charge, Andre Schubert's position is said to be undermined by poor man-management skills. To retain his job, he will have to do better than last term's Euro expedition, when they came bottom of their group.

● TACTICS

Under Schubert, Gladbach play a more stylish and pro-active game, at a high tempo with a lot of positional interchanging. Could adopt any one of 3-2-2-3, 3-5-2 or 4-3-3.

STAR MAN

RAFFAEL

With his artistry, versatility and ice-cool finishing, the Brazilian is worth his weight in gold. His younger brother Ronny is also a professional and the pair played together at Hertha Berlin until the elder sibling joined Dynamo Kiev in Ukraine.

3-2-2-3

CELTIC

Rodgers is statement of intent

Lynchpin...Scott Brown leads by example

The 1967 European Cup winners are in the group stage for the first time in three years after a difficult qualifying campaign.

● The Scottish champions for the past five seasons made a statement of intent with the appointment of former Liverpool boss Brendan Rodgers – and made some major reinforcements to their squad ahead of the Champions League group stages.

● Celtic endured some hairy moments in qualifying – losing away to Gibraltarian side Red Imps and then having close victories over Astana of Kazakhstan and Israel's Hapoel Be'er-Sheva.

● They had a busy summer, bringing in exciting French youngster Moussa Dembele (Fulham), much-travelled winger Scott Sinclair (Aston Villa), experienced Ivorian defender Kolo Toure (Liverpool), Norwegian midfielder Kristoffer Ajer (Start), Dutch goalkeeper Dorus De Vries (Nottingham Forest) and Costa Rican defender Cristian Gamboa (West Brom).

● Midfielder Stefan Johansen was sold to Fulham for £2m, while other fringe players to move on included Anthony Stokes, Stefan Scepovic, Colin Kazim-Richards and Carlton Cole.

Key players: Captain and midfield lynchpin Scott Brown; Ivorian defender Toure; Australian midfielder Tom Rogic.

Stadium: Celtic Park (60,000), known to supporters as Parkhead, is Scotland's biggest stadium.

● MANAGER

Brendan Rodgers joined on a 12-month rolling contract in May 2016, having left Liverpool in October last year.

● TACTICS

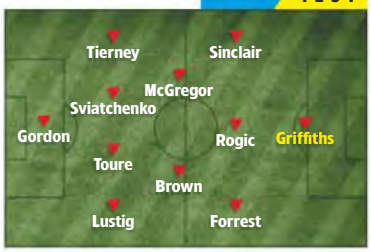
Rodgers is likely to field a lone striker in Europe, with Griffiths his first choice but Dembele offering a strong alternative option. Ryan Christie, Kris Commons and the exciting on-loan Manchester City youngster Patrick Roberts are other attacking midfield options. New signing De Vries could rival first-choice keeper Craig Gordon, while Israel's Nir Bitton could be used in place of Callum McGregor in central midfield.

STAR MAN

Leigh GRIFFITHS

The club's most prolific forward since Swedish star Henrik Larsson, he scored 40 goals in all competitions last season and also became the fastest player in the club's history to score 50 goals.

4-2-3-1



BAYERN MUNICH

Ancelotti chasing an unprecedented fourth title

Goal-poacher...Thomas Muller (centre)

After losing at the semi-final stage for the past three seasons, Bayern – who have won the Bundesliga for four successive seasons – might prioritise Europe over domestic domination this term.

- There are changes a plenty, with Carlo Ancelotti taking over from Pep Guardiola as coach, director of sport Matthias Sammer stepping aside on medical grounds and long-serving general-manager Uli Hoeness, due to return as club president following a spell in prison for tax evasion.
- They opted for quality over quantity in the summer transfer market, spending €35m apiece on Borussia Dortmund centre-back Mats Hummels and midfield dynamo Renato Sanches of Benfica.
- A certain amount of squad pruning was carried out. Fallen hero Mario Gotze was redirected back to Dortmund, along with fringe defensive midfielder Sebastian Rode, while injury-prone Moroccan centre-back Medhi Benatia went on loan to Juventus
- Two issues Ancelotti must resolve are vulnerability to counter-attacks and a distinct tendency to overpass. Repeated injuries to Jerome Boateng and Dutch winger Arjen Robben are also a concern.

Key players: Skipper and world-class full-back Philipp Lahm; all-action midfield warrior Arturo Vidal; wandering goal-poacher Thomas Muller.
Stadium: The Allianz Arena (70,000 for the Champions League) is arguably the best of the new millennium builds.

COACH

Carlo Ancelotti, who took charge in July, is a Champions League specialist, having won the competition a record-equalling three times as a coach: with Milan in 2003 and 2007, and Real Madrid in 2014.

TACTICS

While not sacrificing the Pep fundamentals of possession and game-control, Ancelotti wants his Bayern to be a little more direct going forward and they will not press as intensively. A 4-2-3-1 or 4-3-3 looks the favoured set-up, although the new coach has tried Muller and Robert Lewandowski up front in a 4-4-2.

STAR MAN

Robert LEWANDOWSKI

Despite having a disappointing Euro 2016, the Polish striker remains a world-class front-line focal point and marksman. He scored an impressive 42 goals in 51 games (in all competitions) for Bayern last season.

4-2-3-1

ATLETICO MADRID

Could they make it three out of four?

Competitive...central defender Diego Godin

Last season's beaten Champions League finalists are experiencing the greatest period in their history.

- Under Argentinian coach Diego Simeone, Atletico have reached two Champions League Finals in the past three years – losing to city rivals Real on both occasions – and winning the Europa League in 2012.
- Doubts emerged about Simeone's future after defeat in last season's Final but he remains committed to the club as they seek to challenge the dominance of Barcelona and Real Madrid in Spanish domestic football.
- French forward Kevin Gameiro (Sevilla, €32m) was the main arrival this summer, along with Argentinian midfielder Nico Gaitan (Benfica, €25m) and Croatian defender Sime Vrsaljko (Sassuolo, €16m).
- Borja Baston was sold to Swansea City for £15m, while Argentinian duo Luciano Vietto and Matias Kranevitter were loaned to Sevilla.

Key players: Slovenian keeper Jan Oblak; Uruguayan defender Diego Godin; captain and central midfielder Gabi.
Stadium: The Vicente Calderon (54,900) has been the club's home since 1967 but plans are well advanced for a new 70,000-capacity ground to be built in the east of the city. Atletico's new home is scheduled to be open next year.

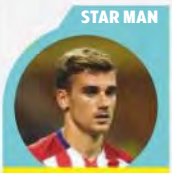
COACH

Diego Simeone joined Atletico in December 2011, replacing Gregorio Manzano, who had been sacked following a Spanish Cup defeat. He led Atletico to the Europa League in his first season in charge, having won the UEFA Cup as a player with Internazionale in 1998.

TACTICS

Atletico are a team that very much reflect the personality and former playing style of their coach. Simeone's so-called "Cholismo" places the emphasis on defensive solidity, fighting spirit and speedy counter-attacks through the likes of Saul, Koke, Antoine Griezmann and Yannick Ferreira Carrasco.

STAR MAN



Antoine GRIEZMANN

Has emerged in the past 12 months as a genuine world-class performer. This summer the Frenchman agreed a contract extension that ties him to Atletico until 2021, with an increased buyout clause of €100m.

4-4-2

PSV

Former champions up against it

Competition...Davy Propper must fight for a place

The 1987 European champions have kept hold of their key players and hope to repeat their form of last season, when they reached the last 16.

● By retaining the Dutch title on the last day of the season, when rivals Ajax could only draw at minnows De Graafschap, the Eindhoven club qualified automatically for the group phase.

● PSV have lost Jeffrey Bruma to Wolfsburg while on-loan Marco Van Ginkel returned to Chelsea. Stijn Schaars (Heerenveen), Adam Maher (on loan to Osmanlispor) and Maxime Lestienne (on loan from Al Arabi) have also left.

● In the transfer market, general manager Marcel Brands was extremely efficient, signing only the players he needed. Siem De Jong (Newcastle United) is reunited with his brother Luuk, while promising midfielder Bart Ramselaar joined from Utrecht just before Ajax could pounce. Ukrainian Oleksandr Zinchenko came on loan from Manchester City. Stuttgart's Daniel Schwaab is Bruma's successor but hasn't got much playing time so far.

Key players: Mexican midfielder Andres Guardado; midfielder Davy Propper; winger Luciano Narsingh.

Stadium: Philips Stadion (35,000) is named after the electronics company that founded the club.

● COACH

Former Barcelona player Phillip Cocu clinched his second title in three years. With Ronald Koeman and Eric Gerets, he is the only person to have won the title as a PSV player and manager.

● TACTICS

Cocu opts for a 4-3-3 system despite lacking a real left winger in the ranks. At present, striker Jurgen Locadia occupies that role as highly-rated youngster Steven Bergwijn is only making his first steps on the highest level. Goals should come from Luuk De Jong, mainly provided by Jetro Willems and Narsingh. In midfield Propper, Guardado, Jorrit Hendrix, Ramselaar, Zinchenko and Siem De Jong will be competing for three places.

STAR MAN

Luuk DE JONG

PSV's top scorer for the past two seasons, he has thrived back in the Dutch league after an ill-fated move to Borussia Monchengladbach. His older brother, Siem, has joined the club on loan for the season.

4-3-3

ROSTOV

Through despite off-field upheavals

Quick...Dmitri Poloz has pace to burn

Against a far from healthy backdrop of financial problems and leadership issues, Rostov prepare to take their first-ever Champions League curtain call.

● Essentially a team of cast-offs who were assembled on a relative shoestring, they defied the odds last season to finish just two points adrift of CSKA in second place. Knocked Anderlecht and Ajax out in the qualification rounds.

● Rostov's most important piece of business during the summer was securing a permanent deal for Iranian front man Sardar Azmoun, who performed so well on loan from Rubin Kazan last term. Attacking midfielder Valeri Yaroshenko, a Russian youth international, was brought in from Zenit's reserve side.

● The sale of Angolan centre-back Bastos to Lazio was a blow to their reputation for defensive meanness. Another to skip town was Gabon schemer Guelor Kanga, who moved to Red Star Belgrade.

● While excellent in counter-attacking mode, they are not comfortable when forced to play on the front foot. In the Russian Premier League last season, they often had problems breaking down teams that defended in large numbers

Key players: Streetwise central defenders Ivan Novoseltsev and evergreen 36-year-old Spaniard Cesar Navas; pacy deep-lying forward Dmitri Poloz; creative spark Aleksandr Yerohkin.

Stadium: Olimp-2 (15,840) remains there home until a new, 45,000-capacity arena is being built for the 2018 World Cup.

● COACH

Dmitri Kirichenko took over when Kurban Berdyev left for Spartak Moscow before the play-off qualifier against Ajax.

● TACTICS

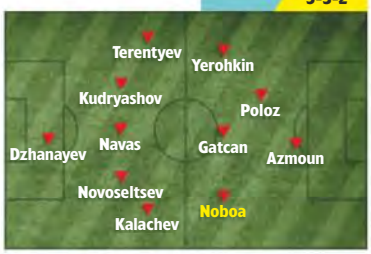
Kirichenko will not alter the tried-and-tested Rostov operating manual of Berdyev. His side will sit deep in defence, soaking up pressure and waiting for the right moment to counter. Highly disciplined in keeping their shape, they are extremely intense in their pressing game and have become masters of the art of winning ugly.

STAR MAN

Christian NOBOA

The Ecuadorian has a Herculean brief as both midfield link-man and stealthy goalgetter. Was Rubin Kazan captain, and scored a penalty, when they drew against Barcelona in the Champions League in September 2010.

5-3-2



CSKA MOSCOW

Dented national pride at stake

Towering...Lacina Traore stands 6ft 8in

Following Russia's dismal showing at Euro 2016, the pressure will be on the national champions to repair some of the damage done to the country's footballing stock.

● Holding off a strong challenge from Rostov, CSKA clinched their sixth Russian Premier League title in May. In Europe they will hope to improve on their abysmal performances in the Champions League since 2013: three times out of three finishing last in their group and only registering three wins in 18 matches.

● Any CSKA upturn will, to a large extent, depend on the powers of recovery of coach Leonid Slutsky, who for the last 12 months has been burning the candle at both ends, taking charge of both CSKA and the national side.

● CSKA thought it best to dip into the loan market for summer reinforcements, acquiring the services of Russian international right-winger Aleksei Ionov from Dynamo Moscow and towering Ivory Coast striker Lacina Traore from Monaco. Traore had previously played in Russia for Anzhi and Kuban Krasnodar.

● For far too long CSKA have put off the job of restructuring their back-line. Central defenders such as the Berezutski twins, Vasili and Aleksei, and Sergei Ignashevich are past their prime.

Key players: Midfield destroyer Pontus Wernbloom; polished right-back Mario Fernandes; promising young box-to-box operative Aleksandr Golovin.

Stadium: The new Arena CSKA (30,000) is due to open its doors a few days before the Champions League kick-off.

● COACH

Quick to resign from his national post after the Euros, Leonid Slutsky did himself no favours with an unwillingness to change a discredited formula.

● TACTICS

Slutsky's instincts are no-frills and caution, espousing a game based on power and athleticism. Counter-attacking should be the order of the day, going hand in hand with a liberal sprinkling of long balls aimed at target man Traore.

STAR MAN

Alan DZAGOEV

Playmaker turned midfield regulator who sadly missed Euro 2016 with a broken metatarsal. Now 26, he made his debut in Russia's second tier aged just 15 and later became the youngest outfield player for the national team at 18.

4-2-3-1

Olympian...Julian Brandt won a silver medal in Rio

BAYER LEVERKUSEN

Still punching above their weight

Over the course of this century, Leverkusen have punched far above their weight in the Champions League, reaching the Final in 2002 and making the last-16 on five other occasions.

● Their third-place finish in last term's Bundesliga was built on a remarkable spring surge of seven consecutive wins, moving up the table from eighth place in a blaze of full-blooded attacking football.

● They broke their transfer record in the summer when paying €20m for Hoffenheim striker Kevin Volland, and then paid similar to Dynamo Kiev for defender Aleksandar Dragovic. Another new face is midfield holder Julian Baumgartlinger, who was picked up for €4m from Mainz.

● Baumgartlinger is a like-for-like replacement for German international Christoph Kramer, who rarely looked at ease last season following a switch from Borussia Monchengladbach and has since retraced his steps.

● While they specialise in fighting back from two or three-goal deficits, Leverkusen would not have to do so if they were more solid defensively and less prone to lapses in concentration. More consistency is required from such as winger Karim Bellarabi.

Key players: Dynamic Chilean central midfielder Charles Aranguiz; goalscoring winger Julian Brandt; ever-improving keeper Bernd Leno.

Stadium: A small, jewellery box of a ground, the BayArena (30,000) boasts great, modern facilities.

● COACH

Roger Schmidt led Red Bull Salzburg to the last 16 of the Europa League and the Austrian double in 2014 before leaving that summer for Leverkusen.

● TACTICS

Schmidt's game plan tends to have three components: an intense high press, keeping the pitch as narrow and compact as possible, and throwing players forward with almost wild abandon. He prefers to use a 4-2-2-2 set-up, featuring two holding midfielders and four adventurous types further forward.

STAR MAN

Javier HERNANDEZ

Since moving to the Rhineland last year, "Chicharito" has not stopped scoring, with 17 Bundesliga goals last term and five in the Champions League. The Mexican was a Champions League runner-up with Manchester United in 2011.

4-2-2-2

TOTTENHAM HOTSPUR

Making a new home at Wembley

Option...Victor Wanyama could come into midfield

Spurs are taking part in the Champions League group stage for only the second time after making impressive progress under Argentinian boss Pochettino.

● Under Mauricio Pochettino, Tottenham have promoted young players, quickly building a team that were the closest challengers to Leicester City last season before falling off the pace in the final strait.

● This season, new signings Victor Wanyama (£11m from Southampton) and Vincent Janssen (£18.5m from AZ) have given Pochettino new options, although midfielders Nabil Bentelab and Ryan Mason were frozen out while negotiations over a new contract for Christian Eriksen were ongoing.

● Spurs will be playing their Champions League games at Wembley as a precursor to using the national stadium as a temporary home for all domestic and European home games during the 2017-18 season. This is because White Hart Lane is being demolished and a new 61,000-capacity stadium – adjacent to the current ground and due to open at the start of the 2018-19 season – is being built. The reduced capacity of White Hart Lane during the redevelopment precluded it from use as a Champions League venue this season.

Key players: Midfielder Dele Alli; central midfielder Mousa Dembele; captain and keeper Hugo Lloris.

Stadium: Spurs will play their 2016-17 Champions League home matches at Wembley (90,000).

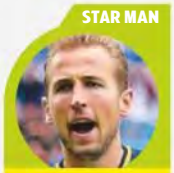
● MANAGER

Argentinian Mauricio Pochettino is in his third season at Spurs, having joined from Southampton in summer 2014 after making his name at Espanyol.

● TACTICS

Pochettino rarely deviates from his preferred 4-2-3-1 formation, but his new signings give him plenty of options for the Champions League campaign. Janssen could play alongside Harry Kane, who likes to drop deep, while Wanyama could come into midfield.

STAR MAN



Harry KANE

Typifies the faith shown in youngsters by Pochettino. The striker had been loaned out to a series of League One and Championship clubs before becoming a regular and quickly establishing himself as an England international.

4-2-3-1

MONACO

Hopes high for knockout stage

Back...Radamel Falcao returns after being on loan

The 2004 runners-up are back in the group stage for the sixth time after beating Spain's Villarreal in the play-off round.

● When Russian money first arrived at the club in 2011, there seemed to be some desire to build Monaco into a European powerhouse. That hasn't materialised and it's hard to see a club whose support is so small becoming a real force.

● Monaco, who were beaten by Porto in the 2004 Final, lost to Valencia in the Champions League play-offs last season, but made it to the quarter-finals in the previous campaign after beating Arsenal in the round of 16. They beat Leverkusen along the way, too, so will feel confident that they can progress out of this group.

● Summer transfers reinforced the defence with Polish defender Kamil Glik (Torino, €11m), Djibril Sidibe (Lille, €15m) and Benjamin Mendy (Marseille, €13m), as well as Italian goalkeeper Morgan De Sanctis (Roma), Portuguese midfielder Miguel Veloso (Dynamo Kiev) and Moroccan midfielder Youssef Ait Bennasser (Nancy). Colombian striker Radamel Falcao returned from his poor spells on loan at Chelsea and Manchester United.

Key players: Experienced Croatian keeper Denijel Subasic; Portuguese midfield lynchpin Joao Moutinho; tough, dominant Polish centre-back Pavel Glik.

Stadium: Stade Louis II (18,500) is one of Europe's most distinctive stadiums. Built on land reclaimed from the sea, the pitch is on the third level, above an underground car park and business offices.

● COACH

Portuguese boss Leonardo Jardim succeeded Claudio Ranieri in summer 2014 after spells with Braga, Olympiakos and Sporting.

● TACTICS

Jardim tends to start with a 4-2-3-1 but his team can transform to either 4-4-2 or 4-5-1 during the course of a game. Comfortable on the ball, Fabinho could be used in midfield, which gives Jardim more options depending on which team they are up against.

STAR MAN

FABINHO

The 22-year-old Brazilian right-back can also operate in midfield and has been a huge success since arriving from Portuguese outfit Rio Ave in 2013. At six foot two, he's strong, powerful and a commanding presence wherever he plays

4-2-3-1

REAL MADRID

Holders aim to retain their trophy

Powerful...Gareth Bale will be hard to stop

After winning their 11th European crown, the defending champions are seeking to become the first club since Milan, in 1990, to retain the European Cup.

● Zinedine Zidane was reluctant to move into coaching when he retired as a player, but since the Frenchman took charge he has thrived, transforming a side that had lost its way – and within a matter of months had won "*La Undecima*", Real's 11th European Cup.

● Real did little transfer business this summer, refusing to get drawn into a financially inflated market, but they did bring striker Alvaro Morata back from Juventus and midfielder Marco Asensio returned from his loan at Espanyol.

● The lack of activity was a surprise given the transfer ban looming in the next two windows. Jese was sold to Paris Saint-Germain and Denis Cheryshev joined Villarreal, but Zidane still has too many attacking midfielders for his preferred 4-3-3 formation.

● Another surprise was the failure to sign a defensive midfielder, leaving Casemiro as the only specialist in that position.

Key players: Captain and defensive leader Sergio Ramos; Croatian midfielder Luka Modric; Welsh forward Gareth Bale.

Stadium: Santiago Bernabeu (81,000) is named after the former Real president who oversaw the building of the famous 1950s sides.

● COACH

Zinedine Zidane succeeded Rafa Benitez in January, having previously been in charge of Real Madrid's Castilla side.

● TACTICS

Zidane has brought a greater balance to Madrid's starting XI, meaning that attacking midfielders such as Isco and James Rodriguez have found themselves spending more time on the bench. Mateo Kovacevic is a useful alternative to the combative Casemiro in the central midfield berth, while Karim Benzema faces competition for the central striker role from the returning Morata. Asensio also looks to be an exciting prospect.

STAR MAN

Cristiano RONALDO

Continues to break goalscoring records, but at the age of 31 – and having finally enjoyed international success with Portugal this summer – it remains to be seen whether he can play a full campaign for Madrid in 2016-17.

4-3-3

BORUSSIA DORTMUND

Back among the elite after a year out

Back home...Mario Gotze returned from Bayern

Reconfigured and revitalised by Thomas Tuchel, the Bundesliga runners-up were one of Europe's most attractive sides last term and will be especially eager after a year's absence from the continental elite.

● Champions League winners in 1997 and finalists in 2013, the *Schwarz-Gelben* swept aside Porto and Tottenham Hotspur in last season's Europa League before losing in the quarter-finals to Liverpool.

● Usually known for their frugal approach to recruitment, Dortmund went wild this summer, splashing out almost €110m on eight new signings, the most expensive being Mario Gotze, who returned from Bayern Munich for €26m, and Andre Schurrle, who cost €30m from Wolfsburg.

● Unfortunately for Tuchel, three key players chose to leave: central defender and skipper Mats Hummels returning to Bayern; playmaker Ilkay Gundogan moving to Manchester City and midfielder Henrikh Mkhitaryan joining Manchester United.

● With so many comings and goings, Tuchel will have his work cut out to quickly find the right blend and shape. Dortmund can be prone to defensive naivety and much will depend on how well former Barcelona centre-back Marc Bartra fits in as Hummels' replacement.

Key players: Midfield regulator Julian Weigl; wide men Marco Reus and Schurrle.

Stadium: Signal Iduna Park (65,829), or the Westfalenstadion as it is commonly known, is the place to go for ear-splitting volume and Ruhr energy.

● COACH

After five years in charge of Mainz, Thomas Tuchel impressed in his first campaign at Dortmund, steering them to second spot with a points haul that would have won the title in 46 of the previous 52 seasons.

● TACTICS

Tuchel's system is basically a hybrid of predecessor Jurgen Klopp's aggressive pressing and lightning-quick transitions, and his own possession-based game with its limitless capacity for shape-shifting, fluidly moving from 4-2-3-1 to 4-3-3 and from 4-1-4-1 to 3-5-2.

STAR MAN

Pierre-Emerick AUBAMEYANG

A reported target for Real Madrid and others this summer, the 27-year-old Gabon striker says he's happy at Dortmund and is under contract until 2020. Extremely fast, he is CAF's current African Player of the Year.

4-2-3-1

SPORTING

Loss of key players makes life tough

Dynamic...holding midfielder William Carvalho

The Portuguese league runners-up have never reached the Champions League knockout stage and the sale of several key players will make that target harder.

● Sporting are a growing force in Portugal under president Bruno De Carvalho and ex-Benfica boss Jorge Jesus, who places great importance on academy players. Rui Patricio, William Carvalho and Adrien Silva were key members of Portugal's Euro- winning side this summer.

● Jesus earned a reputation at Benfica for rebuilding every season following the sale of key players – and it looks like he will have to do so again after they sold Islam Slimani to Leicester City and Joao Mario to Internazionale. Colombian forward Teo Gutierrez moved to Argentina.

● Summer signings included Costa Rica striker Joel Campbell (on loan from Arsenal), Dutch attackers Bas Dost (Wolfsburg) and Luc Castaignos (Eintracht Frankfurt), and Brazilian forward Andre (Corinthians).

● Sporting have never reached the Champions League knockout stage and have a tough group draw but will expect to pick up points against Legia.

Key players: Central midfielder William Carvalho; goalkeeper Rui Patricio; newly signed striker Dost.

Stadium: The Estadio Jose Alvalade (50,025) was opened in 2003 ahead of Portugal's hosting of the 2004 Euros.

● COACH

Jorge Jesus moved from Benfica a year ago after enjoying great success with Sporting's Lisbon rivals

● TACTICS

Jesus likes to play with a single holding midfielder – the dynamic Carvalho – as that allows him to play two forwards. Silva is the central midfield playmaker, while Gelson Martins started early league games this season in place of the departed Joao Mario on the right of midfield, although Campbell is another option as a wide attacker. New striker Dost is likely to replace Slimani, with Andre an alternative.

STAR MAN

Adrien SILVA

The captain and key midfielder almost moved to Leicester City in a late summer transfer but Sporting's retention of his services was a major boost. An academy graduate as well as a member of Portugal's Euro 2016-winning side.

4-1-3-2

LEGIA WARSAW

Group stage is a shop window for many

Rock...Michal Pazdan takes no prisoners

The Polish champions will be competing in the Champions League group stage for the first time in more than two decades.

● Legia are in the group phase for the first time since 1995-96, when they reached the quarter-finals. They also reached the semi-finals of the 1970 Champions Cup, losing to eventual winners Feyenoord.

● Last season's title win was their third Polish league success in four seasons and was followed up this summer with wins over Dundalk from the Republic of Ireland, Slovakia's Trencin and Bosnian champions Zrinjski in the qualifying rounds.

● Summer transfers saw French midfielder Thibault Moulin arrive from Belgian side Waasland-Beveren and he quickly became the team's principal playmaker.

● The draw has not been kind to Legia, but the games will offer their leading players a chance to showcase their skills – notably defender Michal Pazdan, who impressed with Poland during Euro 2016, and Nemanja Nikolic.

Key players: Goalkeeper Arkadiusz Malarz; defensive rock Pazdan; French midfield playmaker Moulin.

Stadium: Stadion Wojska Polskiego (31,000), known as the Polish Army Stadium, has been Legia's home since 1930, and was completely rebuilt between 2008 and 2011.

● COACH

Albanian boss Besnik Hasi moved to the Polish capital this summer having left Anderlecht in March after two years in charge. He replaced Stanislav Cherchesov who is now Russia's national coach.

● TACTICS

Hasi likes an intensive, fast style of play, with one-touch football instead of long passes. He likes his centre-backs to initiate the teams's attacks, with the full-backs pushed up. He shuns defensive midfielders in favour of three playmakers, with one playing a little deeper that the others. Brazilian midfielder Guilherme is another option – he is versatile and can also play at full-back – but he is recovering from a shoulder injury.

STAR MAN

Nemanja NIKOLIC

Centre-forward who is an instinctive finisher with a nose for goals. Born in Serbia, he is a Hungarian international, and was the best player and top scorer in the Ekstraklasa last season, his debut campaign in Poland.

4-5-1

LEICESTER CITY

Debut campaign for surprise champions

Lightning quick...Jamie Vardy will be one to watch

After their shock title win, Leicester are preparing for a first Champions League campaign – past European experience being limited to the Cup-winners Cup (1960-61) and UEFA Cup (1997-98 and 2000-01).

● They won a remarkable title victory last season after being 5,000-1 outsiders and benefitting from a perfect storm of factors: brilliant performances from individuals such as N'Golo Kante, Riyad Mahrez and Jamie Vardy; simple but effective tactics; few injuries; and poor form of their rivals.

● They lost Kante to Chelsea but held onto Mahrez and Vardy and spent heavily on new recruits: Algerian forward Islam Slimani (Sporting), French midfielder Nampalys Mendy (Nice) and Nigeria forward Ahmed Musa (CSKA Moscow).

● New strikers Musa and Slimani are the only players with previous experience of the Champions League, although manager Claudio Ranieri took Chelsea to the semi-finals in 2004.

● Leicester could not stop Kante leaving, but new deals were agreed with Mahrez, Vardy, Danny Drinkwater, Andy King and Kasper Schmeichel, as well as Ranieri.

Key players: Captain and defensive stalwart Wes Morgan; hard-working midfielder Drinkwater; lightning quick goal-poacher Vardy.

Stadium: The King Power Stadium (32,312) was opened in 2002 and is named after the main business of the club's Thai owners.

● MANAGER

Claudio Ranieri was a surprise appointment in July 2015 after his failure with the Greece national side.

● TACTICS

Ranieri relies on heavy pressing to win the ball and get it forward quickly to the pacy Vardy. Kante was a key figure in this strategy, covering large spaces quickly and efficiently, so Mendy has big shoes to fill. The speedy Musa gives a new attacking option, possibly in a wide role as part of a three-man attack (with Vardy, and Slimani or Mahrez) in a 4-3-3.

STAR MAN

Riyad MAHREZ

The players' player of the year in England last season, the Algerian winger's pace and trickery were Leicester's most potent attacking weapon. He has enjoyed a remarkable rise since his move from Le Havre in 2015.

4-4-2

PORTO

Record-equalling appearance

Box to box...Mexico international Hector Herrera

The 1987 and 2004 European champions are back in the group stage for a sixth successive season despite a run of poor form in the Portuguese league.

● The Dragons have lost their grip on domestic football and have gone three years without a Portuguese league title. Last season's disastrous experiment with Spanish coach Julen Lopetegui did not work, with FCP finishing a poor third to Benfica and Sporting.

● Porto beat Roma in the play-off round to book a place in the group stage for a record-equalling 21st time, matching Real Madrid and Barcelona.

● The club is going back to basics under Nuno Espirito Santo, with a bigger role for Portuguese players such as Andre Silva, Andre Andre and Ruben Neves.

● Though traditionally big sellers in the transfer market, there were only a few departures this summer. Defender Maicon returned to Brazil, striker Vincent Aboubacar went on loan to Besiktas, while Dutch defender Bruno Martins Indi joined Stoke City on loan. Winger Yacine Brahimi was wanted by Everton, who would not meet Porto's €40m valuation.

● New signings included Spanish forward Oliver Torres, on loan again from Atletico Madrid, defender Willy Boly from Braga; Belgian forward Laurent Depoitre from Gent, Brazilian defenders Alex Telles (Galatasaray) and Felipe (Corinthians), and midfielder Joao Carlos Teixeira (Liverpool).

Key players: Central midfielder Danilo Pareira; Mexican midfielder Hector Herrera; veteran Spanish keeper Iker Casillas.

Stadium: The Estadio do Dragao (52,000) was opened in 2003 and staged the opening game and a semi-final of the 2004 European Championship.

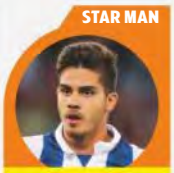
● COACH

Former Porto goalkeeper Nuno Espirito Santo is out to restore his reputation after a disappointing spell at Valencia last season.

● TACTICS

Nuno has plenty of midfield options, including Brahimi, Ruben Neves and Paraguayan Juan Quintero. New arrival Depoitre is another option for the attack.

STAR MAN



Andre SILVA

Porto have high hopes for the 20-year-old who recently agreed a new contract, that keeps him at the club until 2021, with a €60m buyout clause. Called up by Fernando Santos to Portugal's first post-Euros squad.

4-3-3

CLUBBE BRUGGE

MPH's side may lack strength in depth

Evergreen...Timmy Simons will be 40 this year

Exciting times for the *Blauw en Zwart* who are back in the Champions League for the first time since 2005.

● The 2015-16 season was a momentous one for the Flemish flagship club, claiming their first Belgian league crown in 11 years and sealing it with a 4-0 win against domestic arch-rivals Anderlecht.

● For the most part, Michel Preud'homme (MPH) will go with the same set of players as last season – the exception being Belgian international right-back Thomas Meunier, who joined Paris Saint-Germain.

● Meunier is replaced by Holland international Ricardo Van Rhijn, bought for a cut-price €1.8m after falling out of favour at Ajax. Central midfielder Tomas Pina (Villarreal) and left-winger Anthony Limbombe (Mechelen) are also new.

● In a worrying development, key wide man Lior Refaelov is struggling with an adductor injury and might not be fit to start the European campaign.

● It's a widely-held belief in Belgium that Club Brugge do not have enough strength in depth to meet the demands of European and national football. The team are far less sure of themselves away from home.

Key players: French goalkeeper Ludovic Butelle; evergreen centre-back Timmy Simons, who is approaching 40 and still going strong; playmaker Hans Vanaken.

Stadium: Initially called the Olympiastadion, the Jan Breydel Stadion (29,042) was the venue for the 1976 UEFA Cup Final second leg, between Club Brugge and Liverpool.

● COACH

It was an unsettling summer, with constant speculation that Michel Preud'homme would take charge of the Belgian national team or French side Bordeaux. There was much relief among fans when he declined.

● TACTICS

The club used to be renowned for their hard-running and physical style, but under Preud'homme they have been playing the most attractive and refined football in Belgium. MPH's team strikes an excellent balance between defensive rigour and clever attacking movement.

STAR MAN

Jose IZQUIERDO

Electrifying Colombian left-winger who is being watched by several Bundesliga clubs. Quit the game briefly as a youngster when his elder brother, Diego Julian, fell asleep while driving and was killed in a traffic accident.

4-3-3

COPENHAGEN

Reviving memories of glories past

Ace...Paraguayan striker Federico Santander

The Danish champions are back in the Champions League group stage for the first time in three years after wins over APOEL, Astra and Crusaders in the qualifying rounds.

● The club strengthened its squad across the board, bringing Danish internationals back home and signing a couple of overseas players. Defenders Jores Okore and Peter Ankersen came from Aston Villa and Red Bull Salzburg respectively, while Nicolai Boilesen was snapped up from Ajax. They were complemented by Swedish international goalkeeper Robin Olsen and Serbian striker Andrija Pavlovic.

● In Stale Solbakken's first spell as coach of Copenhagen, there were memorable performances in the Champions League group stage, including a 1-0 victory against Manchester United.

● Matthias Zanka Jorgensen has matured as a central defender, while Ankersen is a fine acquisition at right-back. The crucial unknown is how effective the strike partnership of Pavlovic and Paraguayan ace Federico Santander will be.

Key players: Keeper Olsen; central midfield pair of William Kvist and Thomas Delaney, who have both been capped by Denmark.

Stadium: Telia Parken (38,000) will be one of 13 host venues for the multi-city Euro 2020.

● COACH

Stale Solbakken has won six Danish Superliga titles in two spells at the club – which is a marked contrast to a couple of unsuccessful stints in between at Cologne and Wolverhampton Wanderers. Perhaps the air in Denmark suits the former Norwegian international.

● TACTICS

Copenhagen play a standard 4-4-2 that serves them well in the domestic league with the experience of central midfielders Kvist and Delaney a crucial component. The only question is whether Solbakken will feel the need to change his tactics in away matches against Leicester and Porto and maybe play a 4-5-1 formation.

STAR MAN

Benjamin VERBIC

In a side with no stand-out star, the 22-year-old Slovenian made a flying start to his second season at the club, scoring goals and causing havoc with his speed and skill on the wings. Relatively unknown, but could impress.

4-4-2

JUVENTUS

Stronger than ever, even without Pogba

Attacking bite...Dani Alves arrived on a free

Italy's record champions and Champions League runners-up in 2015 look stronger than ever despite the world-record sale of Paul Pogba to Manchester United.

● Any team that loses Pogba might be expected to struggle, but Juventus have reinvested the €105m effectively. Juve also received €30m from Real Madrid for Alvaro Morata.

● New signings include Bosnian Miralem Pjanic (Roma, €32m), Croat Marko Pjaca (Dinamo Zagreb, €23m), Moroccan Medhi Benatia (Bayern Munich, €3m loan), Brazilian Dani Alves (Barcelona, free) and, above all, Argentinian Gonzalo Higuain (Napoli, €90m).

● The transfer activity reinforced their dominance of the Italian domestic scene, where they have won the last five league titles and two Italian Cups. The acquisitions of Higuain and Pjanic has weakened Juve's closest domestic rivals.

● The 2015 Champions League finalists were knocked out by Bayern Munich in round of 16 last season but will be confident of making further progress this year, especially given a relatively straightforward group draw.

Key players: Captain and veteran keeper Gianluigi Buffon; midfield playmaker Pjanic; Argentinian attacking starlet Paulo Dybala.
Stadium: Juventus stadium (41,475) was opened in 2011 and is one of the few grounds in Italy to be owned by a football club.

● COACH

Massimiliano Allegri succeeded Antonio Conte in 2014 and took Juve to the 2015 Champions League Final, against Barcelona.

● TACTICS

Allegri has stuck with the 3-5-2 introduced by previous boss Conte and he can now partner Higuain with Dybala in a fine all-Argentinian attack. Pjanic will replace the injured Claudio Marchisio as the deep-lying playmaker, though he can also be effective further forward. Alves offers attacking bite to the defence, while other new signings, such as Pjaca and Benatia, will strengthen the subs' bench.

STAR MAN

Gonzalo HIGUAIN

Cost Juventus a record €90m fee after his 36 league goals for Napoli last season. The Argentinian put to rest early fears about his fitness with a goal in Juve's opening Serie A game against Fiorentina.

3-5-2

SEVILLA

Through as Europa League winners

Goodbye Toulouse...Wissam Ben Yedder

Last season's Europa League winners are the first holders of UEFA's secondary club cup to gain a place in the Champions League group stage.

● It's been all change in Seville this summer, with Unai Emery leaving for Paris Saint-Germain and being replaced by Argentinian coach Jorge Sampaoli.

● Sampaoli brings thrills and spills – there were 10 goals in Sevilla's first Liga game of the season: a 6-4 home win over Espanyol.

● There have been major changes in the playing squad, with many figures from the Emery era departing: Polish midfielder Grzegorz Krychowiak followed him to PSG; French striker Kevin Gameiro was sold to Atletico Madrid; Argentinian midfielder Ever Banega to Internazionale; captain Jose Antonio Reyes went to Espanyol; Ukrainian winger Yevhen Konoplyanka went on loan to Schalke; and striker Fernando Llorente was sold to Swansea City.

● New arrivals included Wissam Ben Yedder (Toulouse), Franco Vazquez (Palermo), Luciano Vietto and Matias Kranevitter (Atletico Madrid), Joaquin Correa (Sampdoria), Hiroshi Kiyotake (Hanover) and Paulo Henrique Ganso (Sao Paulo). Quite where deadline day signing Samir Nasri, on loan from Manchester City, fits in is open to debate.

Key players: Defensive midfielder Steven N'Zonzi was wanted by England; Vietto is on a season loan; winger Vitolo.
Stadium: Sanchez Pizjuan (42,500) hosted the 1986 European Cup Final won by Steaua on penalties against Barcelona.

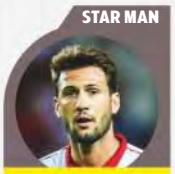
● COACH

Argentinian Jorge Sampaoli joined this summer after stepping down as Chile boss.

● TACTICS

The early signs are that Sampaoli, who is a former assistant to Marcelo Bielsa, will not be afraid to experiment with attacking formations. He has already thought about switching from the 3-3-3-1 he employed with Chile to a more solid 4-1-4-1. In both systems, Vietto has been deployed as the lone striker, with N'Zonzi as the midfield pivot.

STAR MAN



Franco VASQUEZ

A €15m summer signing from Palermo, he was on target early in his Sevilla career, in the UEFA Super Cup game against Real Madrid. Born in Argentina but has opted to play international football for Italy.

3-3-3-1

LYON

On an upward curve once more

Impact...Nabil Fekir could prove to be a handful

OL are back in the group stage for the first time since 2011 and six years on from their best performance, when they reached the semi-finals.

● It feels like a lifetime since Lyon dominated French football and came within a whisker of establishing themselves as a European force, yet it is only six years since they lost to Bayern Munich in the Champions League semi-finals.
● Under coach Bruno Genesio, who took them to second place last season, and with a fine new stadium to play in, Lyon look like they are on an upward curve once more.
● With a solid defence and an energetic, creative midfield, OL are a decent side, but they rely heavily on striker Alexandre Lacazette, who started the domestic season with five goals in his first two games. If he stays fit, Lyon have a chance against most teams.
● The club's reputation for developing talent is still intact, and players such as Corentin Tolisso and Nabil Fekir should make an impact on the European stage.
● Summer signings included Cameroonian defender Nicolas N'Koulou (Marseille), Polish midfielder Maciej Rybus (Terek Grozny) and Argentinian defender Emanuel Mammana (River Plate)
Key players: French midfielder Nabil Fekir; Spanish midfielder Sergi Darder; Cameroonian defender Nicolas Nkoulou.
Stadium: The Parc Olympique Lyonnais (59,000), also known as the Stade des Lumieres, was opened in January this year and hosted games at Euro 2016.

● COACH

Former Lyon player Bruno Genesio stepped up from his assistant role last December when Hubert Fourier departed

● TACTICS

Genesio rarely deviates from his preferred 4-3-3 and he expects his side to work hard and press the opposition. He has been known to switch to a 3-5-2 at times and this Lyon team are disciplined and organised enough to transform when they need to. Cameroon centre-back Nkoulou should bring more grit to defence.

STAR MAN

Alexandre LACAZETTE

A natural, instinctive striker who scores spectacular goals and tap-ins, and gets equal pleasure from both. The 25-year-old is crucial to Lyon's chances and will give even the best defences plenty of headaches.

4-3-3

DINAMO ZAGREB

Dominant at home but fall short in Europe

Import...Brazilian midfielder Jonas

Dinamo have made the group stage of either the Champions League or Europa League in each of the last 10 seasons – but have not gone any further.

● They won an 11th straight Croat league title last spring, and to make this season's group phase they beat Dinamo Tbilisi of Georgia and Austria's Red Bull Salzburg, who pushed them all the way before finally succumbing in extra-time.
● Zoran Mamic, coach for the past three seasons, left in June to take over at Saudi side Al Nassr. His elder brother, Zdravko Mamic, was the long-serving president until he resigned earlier this year, although he remains an "advisor". The brothers – who are accused of corruption, tax evasion and bribery – are suspected of channelling transfer income into their own pockets.
● Dinamo fans have grown used to the club annually selling off their best young prospects and this summer the exodus was particularly painful, with Marco Pjaca moving to Juventus for €23m, and midfielders Josip Brekalo and Marko Rog going to Wolfsburg and Napoli respectively.
● Coming in were Croat international centre-back Marko Leskovic (Rijeka) and Brazilian midfielder Jonas (Flamengo).
Key players: Solid centre-back Gordon Schildenfeld; Chilean front man Angelo Henriquez; Algerian right-winger El Arabi Hillel Soudani.
Stadium: Owned by the city of Zagreb, Stadion Maksimir (35,000) could be replaced by the club's own all-seater arena in three years.

● COACH

The summer coaching vacancy saw ex-Yugoslavia striker Zlatko Kranjcar return for a third spell in charge.

● TACTICS

Kranjcar has alternated between 4-2-3-1 and 4-3-3, and even tried a three-man defence. They have creativity and goals in midfield, but for all their individual class there is no collective pattern. Defensively they can be sluggish and they lack a top midfield holder. The loss of keeper Eduardo to Chelsea could hit them hard.

STAR MAN

Ante CORIC

Wunderkind attacking midfielder who was linked with a move to Liverpool before the transfer window closed. The 19-year-old says he wanted to stay where he was to play Champions League football for his boyhood club.

4-2-3-1

EUROPA LEAGUE FIXTURES

GROUP A

SEP 15	Feyenoord	v	Manchester United
	Zorya Luhansk	v	Fenerbahce
SEP 29	Fenerbahce	v	Feyenoord
	Manchester United	v	Zorya Luhansk
OCT 20	Manchester United	v	Fenerbahce
	Feyenoord	v	Zorya Luhansk
NOV 3	Fenerbahce	v	Manchester United
	Zorya Luhansk	v	Feyenoord
NOV 24	Manchester United	v	Feyenoord
	Fenerbahce	v	Zorya Luhansk
DEC 8	Feyenoord	v	Fenerbahce
	Zorya Luhansk	v	Manchester United

United...Paul Pogba (right) and Zlatan Ibrahimovic

GROUP B

SEP 15	Young Boys	v	Olympiakos
	APOEL	v	Astana
SEP 29	Astana	v	Young Boys
	Olympiakos	v	APOEL
OCT 20	Young Boys	v	APOEL
	Olympiakos	v	Astana
NOV 3	Astana	v	Olympiakos
	APOEL	v	Young Boys
NOV 24	Astana	v	APOEL
	Olympiakos	v	Young Boys
DEC 8	APOEL	v	Olympiakos
	Young Boys	v	Astana

Emotional...Roma's Radja Nainggolan

GROUP C

SEP 15	Mainz	v	Saint-Etienne
	Anderlecht	v	Qabala
SEP 29	Qabala	v	Mainz
	Saint-Etienne	v	Anderlecht
OCT 20	Mainz	v	Anderlecht
	Saint-Etienne	v	Qabala
NOV 3	Anderlecht	v	Mainz
	Qabala	v	Saint-Etienne
NOV 24	Qabala	v	Anderlecht
	Saint-Etienne	v	Mainz
DEC 8	Anderlecht	v	Saint-Etienne
	Mainz	v	Qabala

Goals...Saint-Etienne

GROUP D

SEP 15	Maccabi Tel Aviv	v	Zenit
	AZ	v	Dundalk
SEP 29	Zenit	v	AZ
	Dundalk	v	Maccabi Tel Aviv
OCT 20	AZ	v	Maccabi Tel Aviv
	Dundalk	v	Zenit
NOV 3	Zenit	v	Dundalk
	Maccabi Tel Aviv	v	AZ
NOV 24	Zenit	v	Maccabi Tel Aviv
	Dundalk	v	AZ
DEC 8	AZ	v	Zenit
	Maccabi Tel Aviv	v	Dundalk

Chance...Alexandre Pato of Villarreal

GROUP E

SEP 15	Viktoria Plzen	v	Roma
	Astra	v	Austria Vienna
SEP 29	Austria Vienna	v	Viktoria Plzen
	Roma	v	Astra
OCT 20	Roma	v	Austria Vienna
	Viktoria Plzen	v	Astra
NOV 3	Austria Vienna	v	Roma
	Astra	v	Viktoria Plzen
NOV 24	Roma	v	Viktoria Plzen
	Austria Vienna	v	Astra
DEC 8	Viktoria Plzen	v	AustriaVienna
	Astra	v	Roma

GROUP F

SEP 15	Rapid Vienna	v	Genk
	Sassuolo	v	Athletic Bilbao
SEP 29	Athletic Bilbao	v	Rapid Vienna
	Genk	v	Sassuolo
OCT 20	Genk	v	Athletic Bilbao
	Rapid Vienna	v	Sassuolo
NOV 3	Athletic Bilbao	v	Genk
	Sassuolo	v	Rapid Vienna
NOV 24	Genk	v	Rapid Vienna
	Athletic Bilbao	v	Sassuolo
DEC 8	Rapid Vienna	v	Athletic Bilbao
	Sassuolo	v	Genk

GROUP G

SEP 15	Standard Liege	v	Celta Vigo
	Panathinaikos	v	Ajax
SEP 29	Ajax	v	Standard Liege
	Celta Vigo	v	Panathinaikos
OCT 20	Celta Vigo	v	Ajax
	Standard Liege	v	Panathinaikos
NOV 3	Ajax	v	Celta Vigo
	Panathinaikos	v	Standard Liege
NOV 24	Celta Vigo	v	Standard Liege
	Ajax	v	Panathinaikos
DEC 8	Standard Liege	v	Ajax
	Panathinaikos	v	Celta Vigo

GROUP H

SEP 15	Braga	v	Gent
	Konyaspor	v	Shakhtar Donetsk
SEP 29	Shakhtar Donetsk	v	Braga
	Gent	v	Konyaspor
OCT 20	Shakhtar Donetsk	v	Gent
	Konyaspor	v	Braga
NOV 3	Gent	v	Shakhtar Donetsk
	Braga	v	Konyaspor
NOV 24	Gent	v	Braga
	Shakhtar Donetsk	v	Konyaspor
DEC 8	Braga	v	Shakhtar Donetsk
	Konyaspor	v	Gent

2016-17

GROUP I

SEP 15	RB Salzburg	v	Krasnodar
	Nice	v	Schalke
SEP 29	Schalke	v	RB Salzburg
	Krasnodar	v	Nice
OCT 20	Krasnodar	v	Schalke
	RB Salzburg	v	Nice
NOV 3	Schalke	v	Krasnodar
	Nice	v	RB Salzburg
NOV 24	Krasnodar	v	RB Salzburg
	Schalke	v	Nice
DEC 8	RB Salzburg	v	Schalke
	Nice	v	Krasnodar

GROUP J

SEP 15	Qarabag	v	Slovan Liberec
	PAOK	v	Fiorentina
SEP 29	Slovan Liberec	v	PAOK
	Fiorentina	v	Qarabag
OCT 20	Qarabag	v	PAOK
	Slovan Liberec	v	Fiorentina
NOV 3	Fiorentina	v	Slovan Liberec
	PAOK	v	Qarabag
NOV 24	Fiorentina	v	PAOK
	Slovan Liberec	v	Qarabag
DEC 8	Qarabag	v	Fiorentina
	PAOK	v	Slovan Liberec

GROUP K

SEP 15	Southampton	v	Sparta Prague
	Internazionale	v	Hapoel Be'er Sheva
SEP 29	Sparta Prague	v	Internazionale
	Hapoel Be'er Sheva	v	Southampton
OCT 20	Internazionale	v	Southampton
	Hapoel Be'er Sheva	v	Sparta Prague
NOV 3	Southampton	v	Internazionale
	Sparta Prague	v	Hapoel Be'er Sheva
NOV 24	Sparta Prague	v	Southampton
	Hapoel Be'er Sheva	v	Internazionale
DEC 8	Internazionale	v	Sparta Prague
	Southampton	v	Hapoel Be'er Sheva

GROUP L

SEP 15	Villarreal	v	Zurich
	Osmanlispor	v	Steaua
SEP 29	Steaua	v	Villarreal
	Zurich	v	Osmanlispor
OCT 20	Steaua	v	Zurich
	Osmanlispor	v	Villarreal
NOV 3	Zurich	v	Steaua
	Villarreal	v	Osmanlispor
NOV 24	Zurich	v	Villarreal
	Steaua	v	Osmanlispor
DEC 8	Villarreal	v	Steaua
	Osmanlispor	v	Zurich

6 of the best

Europa League stars to watch

Nick Bidwell on the players who could make their mark on Europe's second club competition

1 Kostas FORTOUNIS

OLYMPIAKOS

Whatever the terms of reference, no Greek Superleague player was more influential last term than this gifted attacking midfielder, whose sumptuous skill-set was at the very heart of the Piraeus club's sixth consecutive national crown.

Catching the eye with his one-touch play, awareness, timing of his forward runs and finishing, the 25-year-old Greece international enjoyed an thoroughly unforgettable campaign, topping the goalscoring chart and assists table, with 18 and 13 respectively.

He might not have proved a sensation during three years in German football at Kaiserslautern, but he has bounced back in style since returning to Olympiakos in 2014 – the club where he was once a youth-teamer.

2 Cedric BAKAMBU

VILLARREAL

The powerful DR Congo striker will need to stay sharp if he is to remain top of the bill for his Spanish club. Last season, his first at the Madrigal following a move from Turkish club Bursaspor, he managed 22 goals in all competitions and was especially potent in the Europa League, scoring nine times as the Villarreal made it to the semi-finals.

In one seismic shift, the 25-year-old has gone from relative unknown to Liga revelation, and this summer he was rumoured to be a target for several big-spending Chinese outfits.

Born in Greater Paris to parents from the Democratic Republic of the Congo, he represented France as a youngster, helping them claim the European Under-19 title in 2010.

3 Rick KARSDORP

FEYENOORD

A good bet to be Holland's right-back in a not-too-distant future, the Feyenoord academy graduate is a typical example of fine all-round Dutch footballer, coming through the Rotterdammer ranks as a number 10 prior to converting to full-back on joining the pro squad at the start of the 2014-15 season.

A prescient decision by then Feyenoord coach Fred Rutten, the 21-year-old youngster is proving to be tailor-made for the new role. Poised and tough in his defensive duties, technically accomplished, he is great on the overlap and an accurate crosser of the ball.

He made his Feyenoord debut in a Champions League qualifier in 2014.

4 Jonatan SORIANO

RED BULL SALZBURG

It's hard to overstate the importance of the Spanish centre-forward to the perennial Austrian champions. Besides duties as skipper, standard-bearer and spokesman, the 30-year-old Catalan is also their guarantee of end-product, netting an amazing 164 goals in 188 competitive matches.

During his four full seasons with the side he has averaged 27 league goals a season, and last term he became the highest-ever foreign marksman in the competition.

Unusual for these mercenary days, he has not used Salzburg as a platform for bigger things, admitting he prefers the main-man role at a domestically dominant club to a mid-table spot in a more glamourous side.

5 Gerson

ROMA

Anxious to reassert themselves in Europe and on the home front, Roma think they have a future midfield beast in the shape of their new Brazilian signing, a €17m acquisition from Rio club Fluminense.

Still only 19, the one-time Barcelona target could, if handled with care, turn out to be an identikit Pogba. Certainly he has all the tools: ability on the ball, strength, power, speed and flair for a killer pass.

Roma coach Luciano Spalletti could deploy him as a pure playmaker in box-to-box mode or even in a wide position. The 39th Brazilian to play for the *Giallorossi*, he will have to develop tactically, but what better place for a crash-course than the Italian game.

6 Viktor KOVALENKO

SHAKHTAR DONETSK

His birth certificate might indicate the innocence of youth – he is 20, to be precise – but as a footballer, the creative midfielder is very much a wise old head.

The hub of Shakhtar's attacking game, his outstanding support play, first-touch, vision and range of pass make him the man who keeps the Pitmen ticking over, varying the tempo, keeping it fluid and hitting raking balls out to the wingers.

And he is no mean taker of chances either, bagging five goals for Ukraine's under-20 side at the World Cup in New Zealand last year.

A product of the Shakhtar youth system, he was the man of the match in February as his club won 3-0 in Germany against Schalke in the Europa League round of 32.

		OVERVIEW	HONOURS	COACH
AJAX	HOLLAND — GROUP G	The European champions of 1971, 1972, 1973 and 1995 have been Europa League regulars since 2011. Their **Amsterdam Arena** (53,000) is Holland's largest stadium.	33 / 18	Former Feyenoord and Vitesse coach **Peter Bosz** is known for his attack-minded football.
ANDERLECHT	BELGIUM — GROUP C	The Belgian league runners-up are in transition following the departure of several key players and there's rarely a real buzz at the **Constant Vanden Stock** stadium (21,500) these days.	33 / 9	**Rene Weiler** joined from Nuremburg and knows his own mind, clearing out those players he didn't fancy.
APOEL	CYPRUS — GROUP B	In 2012 the Nicosia club became the first Cypriot side to reach the last-eight of the Champions League. The country's number one side by some way, they play at the **GSP Stadium** (22,859).	25 / 21	Ex Barcelona and Spain striker **Thomas Christiansen** arrived in June following good work at the helm of AEK Larnaca.
ASTANA	KAZAKHSTAN — GROUP B	Bankrolled by the state, the Kazakh kingpins made their debut in the Champions League group phase last season. Home is the state-of-the-art **Astana Arena** (30,000).	2 / 2	Ex-Bulgaria boss **Stanimir Stoilov** has been at the controls since June 2014 and likes to promote home-grown talent.
ASTRA	ROMANIA — GROUP E	Since controversial owner Ioan Niculae moved the club from Ploesti to Giurgiu's **Marin Anastasovici** stadium (8,500) in 2012, he has gone to jail and staff wages are unpaid.	1 / 1	A gambler who was suspended for betting on his own team's results, **Marius Sumudica** guided Astra to their first title.
ATHLETIC BILBAO	SPAIN — GROUP F	One of Spain's oldest clubs, the famous Basque side have been Europa League regulars in recent seasons, reaching the Final in 2012. They play at the new **San Mames** (53,000).	8 / 23	Former Espanyol, Villarreal, Olympiakos and Valencia boss **Ernesto Valverde** has been in charge since 2013.
AUSTRIA VIENNA	AUSTRIA — GROUP E	They will be playing at **Ernst Happel**, Vienna's main stadium, while the Generali (17,000) is renovated.	24 / 27	Former Basle and Hamburg boss **Thorsten Fink** sees the club as a springboard back to the Bundesliga.
AZ	HOLLAND — GROUP D	The club from Alkmaar have been regulars in the Europa League group stage and reached the quarter-finals in 2012. The **AFAS Stadion** (17,000) opened in 2006.	2 / 4	Two seasons, two Europa League places for **John Van den Brom**, who also did a good job with Den Haag and Vitesse.

LEAGUE WINS / CUP WINS

HOW THEY QUALIFIED	TACTICS	KEY PLAYERS
After a narrow escape against PAOK, winning 3-2, they were eliminated in the Champions League qualifiers by Rostov, 5-2 on aggregate.	Bosz wants to play a 4-3-3 system, but so far it has exposed Ajax's' weaknesses, especially at the back, as Rostov showed. He needs to fix this quickly if Ajax want to survive the group phase.	● **Davy Klaassen**, the captain who leads by example. ● Hakim Ziyech, arguably the best player in the Eredivisie. ● Riechedly Bazoer, only 19 but a physically strong defensive midfielder.
Comfortably saw off Slavia Prague in the play-off round, winning both legs 3-0 for a 6-0 aggregate win.	Weiler prefers 4-3-3 but his squad has changed so much, it's hard to say if he will continue that way. The coach has been called a "Swiss Klopp" so he should be interesting to watch.	● **Youri Tieleman**, a replacement for Steven Defour who was sold to Burnley. ● Record sigining Nicolae Stanciu, who cost €9m from Steaua Bucharest. ● Young midfielder Leander Dendoncker.
National champions for the past four years, they narrowly lost 2-1 on aggregate to Copenhagen in the play-off round of this season's Champions League.	Under Christiansen, APOEL's approach rests on three pillars: an aggressive pressing game, effective set-piece delivery and plenty of wide area penetration. His base formation is a 4-1-4-1.	● Forceful in-form lone front runner **Pieros Sotiriou**. ● Winger Georgios Efrem. ● Battle-hardened left-back and captain, Nektarios Alexandrou, a seasoned European competition campaigner.
The 2015 Kazakh title-winners narrowly lost to Celtic in the Champions League second qualifying round. They booked their Europa League ticket with victory over BATE.	Usually lining up in a 3-5-2 system, Astana have two distinctive faces: bold and refined at home; cautious and opportunistic away. Lots of man-to-man marking and wing-orientated attacks.	● Serb midfielder **Nemanja Maksimovic**, the skipper of his country's under-19 side when they won the European title in 2013. ● Club captain Tanat Nusserbayev, a mobile and elusive front runner. ● Serb target man Dorde Despotovic, brought this year from Red Star Belgrade.
Despite their problems, Astra managed to get past West Ham United in the play-offs after being knocked out of the Champions League qualifiers by Copenhagen.	Denis Alibec and Constantin Budescu are the creative focus in a 4-2-3-1. The pair will shoulder the attacking burden after six other regular first-choice players left the club this summer.	● Constantin Budescu, attacking midfielder sold last year to Chinese club Dalian Yifang but now back on loan. ● Romania international **Denis Alibec**. spent a number of year at Internazionale but struggled to make the breakthrough.
After their fifth-place finish in La Liga last season, Athletic qualified directly for the group stage.	They play 4-2-3-1, with Raul Garcia as the central creative force behind lone forward Aritz Aduriz. Inaki Williams and Iker Munian offer pace and flair on the flanks.	● Aritz Aduriz, better than ever aged 35. ● French-born defender Aymeric Laporte. ● Attacking midfielder **Raul Garcia**.
Third in their domestic league, Austria Vienna beat Kukesi of Albania, Slovakia's Spartak Trnava and Norwegian champions Rosenborg in the qualifiers.	Generally play a 4-2-3-1, with Felipe Pires playing wide on the left. Their only summer outlay was a modest €50,000 on left-back Christoph Martschinko from Hoffenheim.	● Keeper **Robert Almer**, the only home-based player in Austria's Euro 2016 squad. ● Defensive midfield pairing Tarkan Serbest and Raphael Holzhauser.
Finishing third in the league meant they had to beat PAS Giannina (3-1 on aggregate) and Vojvodina Novi Sad (3-0 on aggregate) to reach the group phase.	AZ play a traditional Dutch 4-3-3 system, with wingers Dabney Dos Santos and Alireza Jahanbakhsh. Up and coming full-backs Derrick Luckassen and Ridgeciano Haps are impressive.	● Ron Vlaar, still a commanding central defender despite the injuries. ● Utility player Derrick Luckassen. ● Upcoming left-back **Ridgeciano Haps** is close to a national-team call-up.

	OVERVIEW	HONOURS	COACH
BRAGA — PORTUGAL — GROUP H	The Arsenalistas have made steady progress in recent years, with European football now a regular attraction at the **Estadio Municipal** (30,000), which is chiselled out of a local quarry.	0 / 2	**Jose Peseiro**, temporarily in charge at Porto last season, succeeded Paulo Fonseca this summer.
CELTA VIGO — SPAIN — GROUP G	**Balaidos** stadium (29,000) will be hosting Europa League group-stage football for the first time, while Celta last appeared in the UEFA Cup in 2006-07.	0 / 0	Argentinian **Eduardo Berizzo** has earned a reputation as an innovative tactician since taking charge in 2014.
DUNDALK — REPUBLIC OF IRELAND — GROUP D	The Irish champions will play Europa League games at Dublin's **Tallaght Stadium** (6,000), home of Shamrock Rovers, because Oriel Park, their home ground, is not up to UEFA standards.	11 / 10	**Stephen Kenny** has built a god team on a very limited budget, winning the league in 2014 and the double in 2015.
FENERBAHCE — TURKEY — GROUP A	Fener have a good pedigree in this competition, reaching the round of 16 last term and the semis in 2013. European nights are atmospheric at **Sukru Saracoglu Stadium** (53,000).	19 / 6	After sacking Vitor Pereira they turned to Dutch boss **Dick Advocaat**, who won the 2008 UEFA Cup with Zenit.
FEYENOORD — HOLLAND — GROUP A	The 1970 European champions are struggling to repeat past glories at their **De Kuip** stadium (51,000), which is the second largest in Holland.	14 / 12	**Giovanni Van Bronckhorst** gave the club their first prize since 2008 despite a club record of nine games without a win.
FIORENTINA — ITALY — GROUP J	Taking part in the Europa League for the third season running, having reached the semis in 2015. The **Stadio Artemio Franchi** (43,000) was renovated for the 1990 World Cup.	2 / 6	Former Juventus midfielder **Paulo Sousa** took charge in summer 2015.
GENK — BELGIUM — GROUP F	Genk play at the **Cristal Arena** (25,000), where the atmosphere can sometimes be subdued, but fireworks are a post-game speciality.	3 / 4	At Lokeren before joining Genk last season, **Peter Maes** has been criticised for tactics that are too defensive at home.
GENT — BELGIUM — GROUP H	The 2015 Belgian champions have lost key players Matz Sels, Laurent Depoitre and Sven Kums this summer. They play at the state-of-the-art **Ghelamco Arena** (20,000).	1 / 3	A meticulous planner who likes to build rather than buy teams, **Hein Vanhaezebrouck**. took charge in 2014.

LEAGUE WINS / CUP WINS

HOW THEY QUALIFIED	TACTICS	KEY PLAYERS
Last season Braga won the Portuguese Cup – 50 years after their first triumph – to gain direct entry to the group stage.	Braga lost defender Willy Boly (Porto) and forward Rafa Silva (Benfica) to late transfer deals but Peseiro is likely to stick with his preferred 4-2-3-1 formation.	● Ricardo Horta, highly regarded forward on loan from Malaga. ● Centre-back Andre Pinto. ● **Alan**, veteran Brazilian winger and club captain.
A sixth-placed finish in La Liga was enough to guarantee a place in the group stage.	Berizzo has favoured 4-2-3-1 this season, but the sale of Nolito to Manchester City is a big loss.	● Marcelo Diaz, Chilean defensive midfielder. ● **Pione Sisto**, African-born Danish winger with plenty of pace. ● Iago Aspas, former Liverpool forward.
Dropped down to the Europa League after losing to Legia Warsaw in the Champions League play-off, having beaten Hafnarfjordur and BATE in earlier rounds.	Like to play through the middle. They vary it by using Daryl Horgan on the left wing; he loves to take on defenders and provides some telling crosses for main striker David McMillan.	● Striker **David McMillan**, in brilliant form since joining from Sligo Rovers. ● Left-winger Daryl Horgan, a Damien Duff lookalike. ● Midfielder Robbie Benson, signed from UCD in the close season.
Runners-up in last season's Turkish championship, they went out of the Champions League to Monaco but qualified for the Europa League by hammering Grasshoppers.	While Advocaat stands for an established pattern of play, the Turkish game is all about the individual rather than the collective spirit. He may therefore be tempted to go with a 4-4-2.	● At 33, **Robin Van Persie** may just have one last hurrah left in him. ● Ozan Tufan, midfielder who is one of the most promising young talents in the Fener ranks. ● Martin Skrtel, expected to partner Simon Kjaer in the heart of defence.
Beating Utrecht 2-1 in the Dutch Cup Final meant the Rotterdam club automatically qualified for the group phase.	With Eljero Elia and Steven Berghuis, they play a 4-3-3. Will be interesting to see where veteran Dirk Kuyt will play: behind the striker, as a front man or on the right flank. Or on the bench.	● **Dirk Kuyt**, 19 goals last season show he still has his value. ● Left-winger Eljero Elia, after some miserable years he can still create havoc. ● Tonny Vilhena, who initially refused to renew his contract, is the team's driving force in midfield.
Fifth place in Serie A last season meant automatic qualification for the group stage.	Sousa mostly favoured a defensive three last season in a 3-4-2-1, occasionally switching to a back four. Nikola Kalinic is the lone striker, with Borja Valero pulling the strings in midfield.	● Spanish midfielder Borja Valero. ● Croatian forward **Nikola Kalinic**. ● Italian international wide man Federico Bernardeschi.
Finished fourth in Belgium's league play-offs and came through three rounds of Europa League qualifiers.	Play 4-4-2 with Mbwana Samatta and Nikolaos Karelis up front, or 4-4-1-1 with Leandro Trossard – just returned from a successful loan spell at Leuven – behind the main striker.	● Jamaican teen Leon Bailey, Belgium's young player of the year last term. ● Nigerian defensive midfielder Wilfred Ndidi, another highly rated teenager. ● **Alejandro Pozuelo**, the Spaniard makes the midfield tick.
Gent finished third in Belgium's league play-offs, and beat Romania's Vitorul and Shkendija of Macedonia in the Europa League qualifying rounds.	Vanhaezebrouck's 3-5-2 won him the title in 2015. They will need to find a replacement for Kums, who set the team's rhythm. His past influence cannot be overestimated.	● Winger Moses Simon, who has a €20m valuation slapped on him. ● **Renato Neto**, an experienced head in midfield. ● Striker Jeremy Perbet signed as a replacement for Depoitre.

	OVERVIEW	HONOURS	COACH
HAPOEL BE'ER SHEVA — ISRAEL — GROUP K	Still basking in the glow of their first national crown in 40 years, home is the **Turner Stadium** (16,000).	3 / 1	Ex-Kiryat Shmona boss, **Barak Bakhar**, had a perfect first season, leading them to only their title in 67 years of existence.
INTERNAZIONALE — ITALY — GROUP K	A new era at **San Siro** (80,000) with new Chinese owners, a new coach and some expensive summer signings.	18 / 7	**Frank De Boer** replaced Roberto Mancini two weeks before the start of the Serie A season.
KONYASPOR — TURKEY — GROUP H	The Green-and-Whites are gearing themselves for their first-ever European odyssey. Home games take place at the recently constructed **Torku Arena** (42,276), which opened two years ago.	0 / 0	Fenerbahce icon **Aykut Kocaman** was the country's top scorer three times and has been in charge since October 2014.
KRASNODAR — RUSSIA — GROUP I	A third consecutive outing in the Europa League group stage is not bad at all for a club that only has been in the Russian top-flight since 2011. Play at their local rivals' **Kuban Stadium** (31,600).	0 / 0	**Oleg Kononov**, has not put a foot wrong since arriving in 2013 and has always finished in the domestic top five.
MACCABI TEL AVIV — ISRAEL — GROUP D	On European nights, Israel's most successful club of all-time swop their Bloomfield home for the larger **Sammy Ofer Stadium** (30,820) in Haifa.	21 / 23	Former Ajax and Georgia striker **Shota Arveladze**, was appointed in June, succeeding Peter Bosz.
MAINZ — GERMANY — GROUP C	Based at the **Opel Arena** (26,600), coaching luminaries Jurgen Klopp and Thomas Tuchel learned their chops at a club that is small in resources but big in over-achievement.	0 / 0	A former motor mechanic, Swiss boss **Martin Schmidt** took over from Kasper Hjulmand in February
MANCHESTER UNITED — ENGLAND — GROUP A	**Old Trafford** (75,000) is used to Champions League football and United spent a record sum this summer to get back to the top table of the European game.	20 / 12	Less than a year after leaving Chelsea, **Jose Mourinho** signed a three-year contract this summer.
NICE — FRANCE — GROUP I	All change at the **Allianz Rievera** stadium (35,000), where coach Claude Puel left for Southampton and last season's key player, reformed attacker Hatem Ben Arfa,ww joined Paris Saint-Germain.	4 / 3	Demanding Swiss coach **Lucien Favre** left Gladbach last year and was a surprise choice to replace Puel.

LEAGUE WINS / CUP WINS

HOW THEY QUALIFIED	TACTICS	KEY PLAYERS
Claiming the scalp of Greek side Olympiakos in the Champions League before falling just short against Celtic in the play-off round.	Bakhar is anything but a novice when it comes to tactical changes, using either 4-3-3, 3-5-2, 4-4-2 or 4-1-4-1, and they are especially pro-active in their own backyard.	● Elyaniv Barda, veteran hometown idol and goalscorer supreme. ● Ovidiu Hoban, industrious and gutsy Romanian holding midfielder. ● **Ben Sahar**, one-time Chelsea starlet whose has also played for clubs in Holland, Spain, France and Germany.
Inter finished in fourth place in last season's Serie A – a disappointing position after a promising first-half of the campaign.	De Boer's default formation at Ajax was 4-3-3 and he is likely to favour the same in Milan, though he may try a 3-4-3 with full-backs pushed into midfield.	● Mauro Icardi, Argentinian forward whose agent wife recently negotiated him a new five-year deal. ● **Ever Banega**, Argentinian central midfielder recently signed from Sevilla. ● Samir Handanovic, Slovenian keeper.
Third place last term was their best-ever finish and was an achievement largely built on a long unbeaten run in the new year. Qualified directly for the Europa League group phase.	Kocaman prefers a 4-2-3-1 with an intense, high pressing game and fast counter-attacks on the flanks. They love nothing more than a physical, full-blooded battle.	● Keeper Serkan Kirintili, who was unfortunate not to be included in Turkey's Euro 2016 squad. ● Scottish left-back **Barry Douglas**, joined from Polish side Lech Poznan. ● Riad Bajic, Bosnian striker of much promise.
Fourth in last season's Russian championship, they comfortably secured a Europa League place courtesy of victories over Maltese side Birkirhara and Partizani Tirana of Albania.	Kononov is an innovative and flexible football thinker, producing a cohesive, well-drilled unit. A highly complimentary midfield department is their strong suit.	● Uzbek international, **Odil Ahmedov** is the man who holds it all together for them in midfield. ● Russian international Fedor Smolov, is converted from a winger to a striker. ● Pavel Mamaev, central midfielder turned right-winger.
Runners-up in last season's Israeli Premier League, they beat Gorica (Slovenia), Kairat (Kazakhstan) and Pandurii (Romania) before eliminating Hajduk Split of Croatia on penalties.	Arveladze has promised an attacking style, encouraging his full-backs to push on and laying down a template based on fluidity and rapid changes of rhythm.	● Oscar Scarione, versatile Argentinian signed from Istanbul outfit Kasimpasa. ● Yossi Benayoun, veteran playmaker recently signed in from Maccabi Haifa. ● Ex-Red Star Belgrade keeper **Predrag Rajkovic**, a World Under-20 champion with Serbia last year.
Came sixth in last season's Bundesliga, which was their second-best finish of all time, behind 2011's fifth place. They have now achieved four top-10 spots in the last seven years.	Schmidt's default setting is to deploy two banks of four, with a number 10 playing off the striker. His side's stock in trade is hard-running, superior ball-winning ability and opportunism.	● Turkish international playmaker **Yunus Malli**, the hub of the creative operation. ● Danny Latza, central midfielder who embodies the club's never-say-die spirit. ● Stefan Bell,indomitable centre-back who holds the rearguard together.
United finished fifth in last season's Premier League and also won the FA Cup to gain a straight entry into the Europa League group stage.	A solid 4-2-3-1 though Mourinho may be tempted to rest some of his bigger-name players to give some fringe players a chance in the Europa League.	● World-record signing Paul Pogba. ● Swedish forward extraordinaire **Zlatan Ibrahimovic**. ● Juan Mata, the Spanish midfielder has been a surprising early-season favourite for Mourinho.
Nice finished a strong league campaign in fourth place and qualified directly for the Europa League group stages.	Favre's preferred 4-3-3 formation has looked solid so far but it remains to be seen how he will cope with maverick Mario Balotelli.	● Mario Balotelli, controversial Italian signed on loan from Liverpool. ● Vincent Koziello, midfielder attracting the attention of clubs such as Arsenal and Lyon. ● **Dante**, much-travelled veteran Brazilian defender.

		OVERVIEW	HONOURS	COACH
OLYMPIAKOS	GREECE / GROUP B	Greek champions for a record 17th consecutive season, they play at **Stadio Georgios Karaiskakis** (33,200) in Piraeus.	43 / 27	Former Portugal boss **Paulo Bento** succeeded Victor Sanchez in August. Also coached Sporting for four years.
OSMANLISPOR	TURKEY / GROUP L	Apart from the Intertoto Cup in 2005 – when they were known as BB Ankaraspor – the club from the Turkish capital have not competed in Europe. They play at the **Osmanli Stadium** (19,626).	0 / 0	Ex-Trabzonspor and Akhisar Belediyespor coach **Mustafa Resit Akcay** took over in August last year.
PANATHINAIKOS	GREECE / GROUP G	The 1971 European Cup runners-up have struggled to compete domestically with Olympiakos in recent years. The **Apostolos Nikolaidis** (16,000) has been their home since 1922.	20 / 18	Former Internazionale boss **Andrea Stramaccioni** took over midway through last season.
PAOK	GREECE / GROUP J	The team from Thessaloniki's **Stadio Toumba** (28,800) have been Europa League regulars for the past six seasons, making it to the round of 32 on three occasions.	2 / 4	**Vladimir Ivic** stepped up from youth coach in March following the departure of Igor Tudor.
QABALA	AZERBAIJAN / GROUP C	Without a taste of European action up until last season, they have now qualified for the last two Europa League group phases. Stage their continental games at Baku's **Bakcell Arena** (15,000).	1 / 0	Ukrainian coach **Roman Hryhorchuk** has worked wonders since arriving from Chornomorets Odessa in December 2014.
QARABAG	AZERBAIJAN / GROUP J	Azerbaijan champions for the past three seasons, they have been playing away from their Agdam base and home is now the **Tofiq Bahramov Stadium** (31,200) in Baku.	4 / 5	**Gurban Gurbanov**, the Azerbaijan national team's all-time leading scorer, has been their leader since 2008.
RAPID VIENNA	AUSTRIA / GROUP F	The Austrian league runners-up reached the round of 32 last season. Their **Allianz Stadion** (24,288) is built on the site of the old Gerhard Hanappi.	32 / 14	German boss **Mike Buskens** joined from Greuther Furth last year, having also been in charge of Fortuna Dusseldorf.
RED BULL SALZBURG	AUSTRIA / GROUP I	Owners Red Bull sanctioned further spending this summer, but the team from the **Red Bull Arena** (31,000) crashed out of the Champions League qualifiers.	10 / 4	**Oscar Garcia** had one-year stints at Maccabi Tel Aviv and Brighton before joining Salzburg in December 2015.

LEAGUE WINS / CUP WINS

HOW THEY QUALIFIED	TACTICS	KEY PLAYERS
Defeat to Hapoel Beer-Sheva in the Champions League cost Victor Sanchez his job after just two months in charge. They beat Arouca of Slovenia in the Europa League play-off.	A 4-2-3-1, with Esteban Cambiasso and Luka Milivojevic as the midfield holders, and summer signing Marko Marin giving new options out wide.	● Argentinian midfielder Esteban Cambiasso. ● Nigerian centre-forward **Ideye Brown**. ● Attacking midfielder Kostas Fortounis.
Thanks to a fine second-half of the season, they finished fifth in the league. Booked a Europa League spot by beating Zimbru Chisinau, Nomme Kalju and Danish outfit, Midtjylland.	Relying on experience, their 4-2-3-1 has a solid look, with a premium on power and defensive organisation. They do not take many risks and are hard to grind down.	● **Zydrunas Karcemarskas**, Lithuanian keeper who arrived from Gaziantepspor in the close season. ● Pierre Webo, veteran Cameroon centre-forward. ● Tiago Pinto, attack-minded Portuguese left-back.
After a third-place finish in the Greek league, they beat Brondby and AIK in the Europa League qualifiers.	Stramaccioni favours a 3-4-3, with a central striker flanked by newly signed wingers Victor Ibarba and Mubarak Wakaso.	● **Marcus Berg**, Swedish striker who has been their top scorer for the past three seasons. ● Cristian Ledesma, veteran midfielder signed from Lazio this summer. ● Zeca, Portuguese midfielder and captain.
Topped the end-of-season Greek league play-offs but lost to Ajax in the Champions League qualifier. Then beat Dynamo Tbilisi in a Europa League qualifier.	Mostly an expansive 4-3-3 but can switch to a more defensive 4-2-3-1 when playing away from home.	● Angel Crespo, fills a big gap in defence. ● Left-sided midfielder Dimitris Giannoulis, one of the stars of the Greek league last season. ● Captain and striker **Stefanos Athanasiadis**.
Third in the league last term, they enjoyed a fantastic run of qualification success, brushing aside Samtredia of Georgia, MTK Budapest, French outfit Lille and Slovenia's Maribor.	Appropriately for a club financed by a construction group, they are solid and well-organised. Excellent at soaking up pressure and exploiting the few chances that come their way.	● Filip Ozobic, newly arrived Croat midfielder with a stinging right-foot shot from distance. ● Dmytro Bezotosny, Ukrainian keeper was a hero in the Lille giant-killing. ● Commanding centre-back **Vitali Vernydub**, another Ukrainian import.
After losing on away goals to Viktoria Plzen in the third qualifying round of the Champions League, they regrouped to see off Swedish side IFK Gothenburg in a Europa League eliminator.	Gurbanov likes to use a fluid 4-3-3, with his side the hunting the ball in packs and then employing a short-passing game in which care in possession is vital.	● **Reynaldo**, Brazilian striker who spent five years in Belgian football prior to joining Qarabag in 2013. ● Muarem Muarem, Macedonian now back from Eskisehirspor in Turkey. ● Dani Quintana, much-travelled Canary Island-born winger.
Beat Torpedo Zhodino of Belarus and Slovakia's Trencin in the Europa League qualifying rounds.	Buskens nearly always plays 4-2-3-1 and prefers an attacking game using Louis Schaub's pace on the wing. Stefan Schwab conducts the midfield and Joelinton is the lone striker.	● Slovakian keeper Jan Novotna. ● Young midfielders Stefan Schwab and Louis Schaub. ● **Joelinton**, Brazilian forward on loan from Hoffenheim.
The Austrian champions were beaten by Dinamo Zagreb in the Champions League qualifiers and dropped into the Europa League.	Usually a 4-3-3 with the midfielders and forwards close to each other and high up the pitch. Sometimes a less ambitious 4-2-3-1 is used. Aggressive pressing is a Salzburg hallmark.	● Paulo Miranda, versatile Brazilian defender. ● **Valon Berisha**, Norwegian international midfielder who has now opted to represent Kosovo. ● Jonathan Soriano, prolific Spanish striker.

	OVERVIEW	HONOURS	COACH
ROMA — ITALY — GROUP E	The *Giallorossi* are back in European competition after four seasons away. The **Stadio Olimpico** (70,000) has hosted the European Cup/Champions League Final four times.	3 / 9	**Luciano Spalletti** is back in his second spell at Roma after four seasons at Zenit.
SAINT-ETIENNE — FRANCE — GROUP C	Champions Cup runners-up in 1976, they are in the Europa group stage for the third year running but fans at **Stade Geoffroy-Guichard** (42,000) do not expect a long cup run.	10 / 6	The long-serving **Christophe Galtier** has been in charge since 2009.
SASSUOLO — ITALY — GROUP F	In Europe for the first time, they will play at the **Stadio Cittadel Tricolore** (20,000) because their own Stadio Enzo Ricci is too small.	0 / 0	Former Roma midfielder **Eusebio Di Francesco** has been central to the *Neroverdi*'s success.
SCHALKE — GERMANY — GROUP I	With European nights at the **Veltins-Arena** (54,740) very special, this campaign will hark back to the club's greatest-ever moment: their triumph over Internazionale in the 1997 UEFA Cup Final.	7 / 5	Ex-Augsburg miracle worker **Markus Weinzierl** was headhunted this summer to replace Andre Breitenreiter.
SHAKHTAR DONETSK — UKRAINE — GROUP H	After six consecutive seasons in the Champions League, Shakhtar are in the competition they won in 2009. Due to civil war in east Ukraine, they now play at **Arena Lviv** (34,000).	9 / 14	With **Mircea Lucescu** gone, former Porto, Braga and Pacos Ferreira boss Paulo Fonseca has big shoes to fill.
SLOVAN LIBEREC — CZECH REPUBLIC — GROUP J	Have competed in the Europa League for the past four seasons, reaching the round of 32 in 2014, and play at the riverside **Stadion U Nisy** (9,900).	3 / 2	**Jindrich Trpisovsky**, who is known as the "Czech Klopp", was coaching in the Czech third tier three years ago.
SOUTHAMPTON — ENGLAND — GROUP K	The Saints are in the Europa League group stage for the first time, having lost to Midtjylland in a 2015 play-off. **St Mary's** (32,500) opened in 2001.	0 / 1	Frenchman **Claude Puel** was hired this summer to replace Ronald Koeman.
SPARTA PRAGUE — CZECH REPUBLIC — GROUP K	Reached the quarter-finals last season and play at the **Letna** (18,720), which frequently hosts Czech national team games.	33 / 14	The pressure is on **Zdenek Scasny** to deliver some silverware with a new-look team.

LEAGUE WINS / CUP WINS

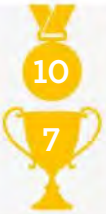
HOW THEY QUALIFIED	TACTICS	KEY PLAYERS
Roma finished third in Serie A last season but a disastrous Champions League qualifier saw them crash out to Porto and drop in the Europa League.	Spalletti likes a fast-tempo 4-3-3, with the midfield tempo dictated by Danielle De Rossi, using the pace and trickery of Mohamed Salah and Stephan El Shaarawy in attack.	● Radja Nainggolan, dynamic Belgian midfielder. ● Daniele De Rossi, captain and midfield playmaker. ● **Mohamed Salah**, Egyptian winger.
Qualified for the Europa League by the skin of their teeth after finishing sixth last season. Made it to the group stage after seeing off AEK Athens and Beitar Jerusalem.	Galtier likes to go for a 4-3-3 set-up and the defence will be a tough nut to crack. However, they look too lightweight up front to harbour any serious European ambitions.	● Stephane Ruffier, Solid, reliable keeper ● **Florentin Pogba**, elder brother of Paul and a strong, aggressive central defender. ● Midfielder Jordan Veretout, back in France after failing to make an impact at Aston Villa.
After their highest-ever finish of sixth in Serie A, they beat Lucerne and Red Star Belgrade to reach the group stage.	Di Franscesco favours 4-3-3, with prolific striker Domenico Berardi central to their fortunes. A small squad may stretched by their European debut.	● Centre-forward Domenico Berardi. ● Centre-back **Francesco Acerbi**. ● Ghana midfielder Alfred Duncan.
Last season, the *Gelsenkirchener* came a disappointing fifth in the Bundesliga, leaving them one place and four points shy of a Champions League berth.	Weinzierl talks about ringing the changes, from a 4-2-3-1 set-up to a three-man back-line or dual strikers. He was not helped by an injury to right-back Coke, who arrived from Sevilla in the summer.	● **Breel Embolo**, Swiss striker signed for a club record €27.5m from Basel. ● Ralf Fahrmann, underrated keeper. ● Benedikt Howedes, Nationalmannschaft World Cup winner who is joined in central defence by recently acquired ex-Werder Bremen and Wolfsburg veteran Naldo.
League runners-up, they lost on penalties to Young Boys of Berne in the Champions League qualifiers but saw off Istanbul BB in an Europa League repechage.	Either using a 4-3-3 or a 4-4-2, Fonseca is a devotee of open, attacking football and looks to stretch the play, encouraging the full-backs to constantly advance.	● **Darijo Srna**, raiding right-back and captain who has been heart and soul of the team for 13 years. ● Viktor Kovalenko, midfield link man. ● Marlos, lively Brazilian left-winger who remains on board, despite all the rumours of a summer departure.
Third place in the league, they went into the Europa League qualifiers and beat Admira Wacker of Austria and AEK Larnaca of Cyprus.	Under Trpisovsky, Liberec typically play in a counter-attacking 4-5-1 formation, transitioning rapidly into attack after winning the ball.	● **Jan Sykora**, versatile defender or midfielder who is a rising star of Czech football. ● Milan Baros, veteran striker who was a surprise signing from Mlada Boleslav. ● Martin Latka, imposing defender who brings experience to a young back line.
They went directly into the group stages after finishing sixth in last season's Premier League.	Puel favours 4-3-1-2 with new signing Pierre-Emile Hojbjerg as the deep-lying playmaker and Dusan Tadic playing behind a front two.	● Dusan Tadic, Serbian midfielder. ● **Jose Fonte**, Portuguese centre-back. ● Pierre-Emile Hojbjerg, Danish midfielder signed from Bayern Munich this summer.
The Czech league runners-up lost to Steaua Bucharest in the Champions League qualifiers and dropped into Europa League qualifiers, where they beat Denmark's SonderjyskE.	Scasny has experimented with 3-5-2 but reverted to a more traditional 4-5-1 for the qualifiers against SonderjyskE.	● Michal Kadlec, experienced central defender/right-back. ● **Borek Dockal**, the main source of creativity until Tomas Rosicky is fit. ● Striker Vaclav Kadlec, back at the Letna with a point to prove.

OVERVIEW | HONOURS | COACH

STANDARD LIEGE

BELGIUM — GROUP G

The Belgian Cup-holders' **Sclessin** (30,000) is the ground with the hottest atmosphere in the country and their Ultras have a fearsome reputation.

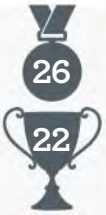


Yannick Ferrera joined from Sint Truiden last year 2015 but does not appear to have the full backing of the board.

STEAUA BUCHAREST

ROMANIA — GROUP L

Romania's most popular club sold several key players, with Varela (PAOK) and Alexandru Chipciu (Anderlecht) among those leaving the **National stadium** (55,000).



Laurentiu Reghecampf is in his second spell in charge.

VIKTORIA PLZEN

CZECH REPUBLIC — GROUP E

In the Europa League for the sixth year running, home is the rebuilt **Doosan Arena** (11,700).

Roman Pivarnik succeeded Karel Krejci and must maintain a dynasty that has won four titles in six years.

VILLARREAL

SPAIN — GROUP L

Will hope to improve on last season's round of 16 loss to eventual winners Sevilla. Half of the city's population would fit into **El Madrigal** stadium (24,000).

Former Elche and Getafe boss **Fran Escriba** was the surprise choice to replace Marcelino this summer.

YOUNG BOYS

SWITZERLAND — GROUP B

The club from Berne, where the **Stade de Suisse** (32,000) is built on the site of the old Wankdorf stadium, have twice reached the round of 32 in recent seasons.

Austrian boss **Adi Hutter** led Grodig to the Europa League and also won the league and cup double with Salzburg.

ZENIT

RUSSIA — GROUP D

Made the last 16 of the Champions League three times in the last five years. While waiting for their new arena to be completed, they are playing at the **Petrovsky Stadium** (21,000).

After a dozen glorious years at Shakhtar Donetsk, **Mircea Lucescu** has opted for a new project.

ZORYA LUHANSK

UKRAINE — GROUP A

Based in the east of Ukraine, but playing in Zaporizhia, home games in this, their fourth European campaign, will be staged at the **Lobanovskiy Stadium** (16,873) in Kiev.

Once a defender with German club Chemnitzer, **Yuriy Vernydub** has been Zorya coach for the past five years.

ZURICH

SWITZERLAND — GROUP L

The club, who share the **Letzigrund** (26,000) with Grasshoppers, were relegated last season but won the Swiss Cup.

Uli Forte was handed a poisoned chalice at the end of last term with Zurich teetering on the brink of relegation.

LEAGUE WINS | CUP WINS

HOW THEY QUALIFIED	TACTICS	KEY PLAYERS
As winners of the Belgian Cup, Standard qualified directly for the group stage.	Ferrera's tactics change regularly but he's been trying out 4-5-1 of late, with the club keen to bring through their own youngsters.	● **Adrien Trebel**, French midfielder with the experience and nous to run midfield. ● Corentin Fiore, 21-year-old defender who is likely to be called up to the national side some time soon.
As league runners-up, Steaua qualified for the Champions League but they were heavily beaten in the play-off by Manchester City.	Steaua will keep the 4-2-3-1 system which is a long time favourite of Reghecampf's, who also tried to implement a more exciting 4-3-3 but with little success.	● **Bogdan Mitrea**, centre-back on loan from Ascoli. ● Brazilian midfielder Fernando Boldrin, the fluid force in the team's midfield. ● Captain and defensive midfielder Mihai Pintilii.
Lost in the Champions League play-offs to Ludogorets of Bulgaria, having beaten Qarabag of Azerbaijan in the earlier round.	Pivarnik has kept faith with the attacking football philosophy laid down by his predecessors but prefers fielding two strikers rather than sticking with Krejci's 4-2-3-1 formation.	● Roman Hubnik, central defender who is a leader on and off the pitch. ● Marek Bakos, Slovak striker re-signed over the summer after scoring 12 goals for Slovan Liberec. ● **Jan Kopic**, in-form wide man.
A fourth-place finish in La Liga took Villarreal into the Champions League, but a play-off defeat to Monaco sent them into the Europa League groups stage.	They spent heavily this summer and new recruits Pato and Roberto Soriano give Escriba new options for his preferred 4-4-2 formation.	● Cedric Bakambu, powerful DR Congo striker. ● **Alexandre Pato**, looking to get his European career back on track. ● Bruno Soriano, midfielder and captain.
As runners-up in last season's league, they beat Shakhtar Donetsk but lost to Borussia Monchengladbach in the Champions League play-off.	Score plenty of goals but the defence is prone to collapse. They generally play 4-4-2 but can switch to a three-man defence. Most attacks go through Miralem Sulejmani on the left flank.	● Cameroon-born keeper Yvon Mvogo. ● Midfielders Denis Zakaria and **Miralem Sulejmani**. ● French striker Guilherme Horau.
As Russian Cup winners, Zenit qualified directly for the Europa League group phase.	Mainly deploying a 4-3-3, Lucescu will rely on technically accomplished and versatile players, a high tempo and the lightning-quick raids of his wingers.	● Giuliano, Brazilian goalscoring midfielder signed from Gremio for E7m. ● **Oleg Shatov**, Russia winger. ● Belgian engine room regulator. Axel Witsel, still at the club after a proposed move to Juventus fell through on transfer deadline day.
Last season's fourth in the Ukrainian Premier League was their best-ever finish. With Dnipro banned from Europe, they qualified directly for the group phase.	Vernydub is quite a flexible tactician and his side are workmanlike, enterprising and offering a decent mix of styles – equally able to go long and direct as stroke the ball around.	● Sasha Karvayev, right-sided midfielder on loan from Shakhtar Donetsk. ● **Mykyta Kamenyuka**, left-back and skipper. ● Paulinho, tricky Brazilian winger bought from Corinthians early this year.
As Swiss Cup holders, they qualified directly for the Europa group stage.	They nearly always play with a 4-2-3-1 with a lone striker, but this could change when they switch from the Swiss second tier to the Europa League. There is plenty of experience at the back.	● Experienced defender Alain Nef. ● Midfielder Oliver Buff. ● **Armando Sadiku**, the Albanian plays as the lone striker.

World Soccer vintage 48 years ago

October 1968

Ajax and Rinus Michels set sights on European glory

There was Bundesliga action between Hanover and Borussia Monchengladbach on the cover of *World Soccer*'s October 1968 edition, while inside featured the exploits of Ajax, who had gone from Eredivisie strugglers to three-in-a-row Dutch champions and now had their sights set on the European Cup.

However, as Jim Hawthorne explained, their dream would have to wait a while.

"Just four years ago, the Ajax Football Club of Amsterdam was languishing near the bottom of the Dutch First Division," began Hawthorne. "Then their former centre-forward Rinus Michels took over as club coach and things began to improve rapidly.

"Michels had worked wonders with his largely home-bred team, but although most Dutch followers expected Ajax to fare better than in 1960, nobody at the time regarded them as a serious contender for Europe's premier club prize.

"Ajax, however, playing football of high quality and possessing a great penchant for scoring goals, were definitely on the way up and Michels knew they could surprise quite a few teams."

Having been knocked out by Fredrikstad of Norway in the preliminary round in 1960, Ajax began the 1966-67 European Cup by beating Besiktas of Turkey 4-1 on aggregate in the first round. And better was to come, with Hawthorne continuing: "Having disposed of Liverpool so efficiently [winning 5-1 in Amsterdam and 7-3 on aggregate], the previously 'unknown' Ajax team became the centre of attraction in Europe."

Progress...despite a tough opening tie against Nuremberg, Ajax would go on to reach the 1968-69 European Cup Final

TWENTY-FOUR WORLD SOCCER, October, 1968

Focus on the crack Netherlands team—AJAX AMSTERDAM—

NO LIGHTNING LUCK OF THE DRAW

By Jim Hawthorne

JUST four years ago the Ajax Football Club of Amsterdam was languishing near the bottom of the Dutch First Division. Then their former centre-forward Rinus Michels took over as club coach and things began to improve rapidly. They won the 1965-66 league championship thus earning the right to participate in the European Champions Cup for the first time since 1960 when they were knocked out rather ignominiously in the preliminary round by Fredrikstad of Norway, 4-3 on aggregate.

Michels had worked wonders with his largely home-bred team but although most Dutch followers expected Ajax to fare better than in 1960 nobody at the time regarded them as a serious contender for Europe's premier club prize. Ajax, however, playing football of high quality and possessing a great penchant for scoring goals, were definitely on the way up and Michels knew that they could surprise quite a few teams.

Having comfortably eliminated Besiktas of Turkey in the first round by 2-0 and 2-1, they were then unfortunately drawn against very formidable opposition in the shape of the English champions Liverpool. To many people in England this represented an easy draw for Liverpool, semi-finalists only two years previously and one of the favourites for the Cup. Everyone confidently expected them to encounter little difficulty with the Dutch "part-timers" as many British pressmen so naively called them. What happened, of course, is now soccer history. Liverpool received a merciless 5-1 beating by a very fine Ajax side whose speed and technique both on and off the ball were too much for the hesitant and inflexible defence.

IMPRESSIVE

"Fluke!" everyone cried, "they will be thrashed in the return." Instead of which Ajax looked even more impressive at Anfield. Despite the baying of the "kop", they cleverly contained Liverpool in the first half and twice went into the lead in the second before Roger Hunt's 86th minute goal saved the Merseysiders from a second humiliating defeat.

Many "new" names were introduced to English soccer fans. Goalkeeper Bals, hard working wing-half Groot and forwards Swart, Nuninga and Keizer. But the man who made the greatest impression was centre-forward Johan Cruyff. This slightly built but highly gifted leader of the attack scored both Ajax goals at Anfield and was quite brilliant in both games. Quick and decisive in the penalty area, he has many of the qualities of Inter's Sandro Mazzola in his ability to create scoring opportunities for himself out of nothing.

Having disposed of Liverpool so efficiently the previously "unknown" Ajax team became the centre of attraction in Europe. Surely now they stood a very good chance of winning the trophy, especially as the more fancied teams in the competition were knocking each other out in the top quarter of the draw.

In the quarter-finals Ajax were paired with the Czechoslovakian champions Dukla Prague. The revitalized army team with many "old heads" in its ranks played splendidly in Amsterdam to come away with a well deserved 1-1 draw. When Swart opened the scoring in the 62nd minute in Prague, however, Ajax looked set for the semi-finals. Then, in a most unlucky finale, they conceded a disputed penalty and a disastrous own goal which put them out of the competition.

It was wretched luck for Ajax and a great pity because by the time the semi-finals were played Dukla had shot their bolt and Celtic beat them comfortably. Ajax would certainly have been a far better match for

Manager of Ajax Amsterdam Rinus Michels prepares for training. (Metelmann)

However, they lost in the next round to Dukla Prague – and the following season they had the misfortune to be drawn against six-time European champions Real Madrid in the first round. Although they acquitted themselves well with two 1-1 draws, the tie was decided by an extra-time goal from Madrid's Jose Luis Veloso.

"Ajax, who had a team good enough to test the best in Europe, now had to sit it out for at least another year," commented Hawthorne on the defeat by Real.

"To complete a hat-trick of league wins, therefore, and get back into Europe for the coming season became the club's top priority. This they did, although their great rivals Feyenoord of Rotterdam pushed them closer than in the previous two seasons."

So, in the European Cup for a third successive year, Hawthorne felt "convinced that given the breaks Ajax could go a long way and possibly the whole way" in the 1968-69 European Cup.

And they did indeed beat Nuremberg, Fenerbahce, Benfica and Spartak Trnava to reach their first European Cup Final, where they lost 4-1 to Milan.

Michels would have to wait another two years before he would eventually lead Ajax to European glory. WS

"Given the breaks Ajax could go a long way and possibly the whole way in the European Cup"

WORLD SOCCER, October, 1968 — *TWENTY-FIVE*

Dutch Champions ★

the Scots and who knows might even have given them the "Liverpool" treatment. But that's football and pure conjecture and in the event Ajax's aspirations for that year ended in Prague.

After all the tears had been shed over their defeat, Michels told the players to put it out of their minds. They again walked away with the league title, scoring a record 122 goals in the process, and looked forward to renewing their European Cup battles having gained that extra little bit of experience. What is more they had strengthened their team considerably by signing the Yugoslavian wing-half Velibor Vasovic from Partizan Belgrade.

EXPERIENCED

Vasovic, a highly experienced international who could defend or attack equally well, had scored Partizan's only goal in their 2-1 defeat by Real Madrid in the 1966 European Cup final. Although unable to take part in the Dukla matches, Vasovic helped his team considerably to carry off their second Dutch championship running and would be a vital factor in the coming European Cup campaign.

With seeding being introduced for the first time, Ajax were confident that, given an easy first round draw to establish themselves and their confidence, they would be in with a good chance. The draw, therefore, was eagerly awaited. Then it was announced. Ajax of Amsterdam would play . . . Real Madrid. What a blow! To be paired against the six-time winners of the Cup in the very first round.

The result was two very fine football matches, 1-1 in Amsterdam and 1-1 in Madrid after 90 minutes, with Veloso's goal in extra-time at San Bernabeu just tipping the scales in favour of the Madrilenos. Both games had been superb entertainment for the huge crowds that attended them but this was scant compensation for Ajax who had a team good enough to test the best in Europe but who now had to sit it out for at least another year.

HAT-TRICK

To complete a hat-trick of league wins, therefore, and get back into Europe for the coming season became the club's top priority. This they did although their great rivals Feijenoord of Rotterdam pushed them closer than in the previous two seasons. The claim that this Ajax team was the best club side that Holland has ever known, however, was no idle boast and their consistent displays throughout the season was ample proof of this.

At the beginning of February they again reinforced their team by signing a second foreign player, Swedish international Inge Danielsson from Halsingborg.

I was fortunate to see Ajax, complete with Danielsson but minus Vasovic, play in Geleen against Fortuna towards the end of last season. At the time Geleen were near the bottom of the league and in fact were eventually relegated but Ajax did not treat them lightly and registered a 4-1 win in an excellent and entertaining game.

Prompted by Nuninga, who looks and plays very much like George Eastham, their swift moving attack soon began to trouble the Fortuna defence. With Cruyff spending most of the game on the left wing showing his immense class only in flashes, Danielsson in the middle became the dominant figure. He scored a brilliant hat-trick and late in the game almost demolished the cross-bar with another shot from the edge of the penalty area. All in all a very impressive display. I was convinced that given the breaks Ajax could go a long way and possibly the whole way in the European Cup.

So once again the draw for the first round was eagerly awaited and once again Ajax came out of it badly, drawn against Max Merkel's powerful West German champions 1FC Nürnberg! Undoubtedly both matches between these two teams—two of the best in the competition—will be well worth watching and undoubtedly the winners of the tie will be expected to progress a long way in the competition. Ajax, however, must now be wondering. Other teams manage to draw easy opposition in the early stages, why not them?

It will be an uphill fight for Ajax. If they can get past their very tough first hurdle then maybe their fortunes will change but at this moment don't talk about the luck of the draw in Amsterdam.

Johan Cruyff is Ajax's most explosive asset. In the photo above he is seen embracing team-mate Sjaak Swart who has just scored a goal. In the picture below all the power and determination of this young man is seen in action for Holland against Czechoslovakia. (O)

Also in this issue...

p9 John Stone reported from Scotland on the lesser-known Shankly brother who was nurturing some talented players at Hibernian, writing: "Bob Shankly, unlike his brother Bill – that fast-talking firebrand – is one of the quieter of Scottish team bosses. So when Bob Shankly lets off steam, the people responsible had better beware." Bob Shankly called the transfer market "a racket" and indicated there were dodgy goings-on to try to recruit four of his young rising stars: Colin Stein, Pat Stanton, Peter Marinello and Peter Cormack – the last of whom eventually ended up at his brother's club, Liverpool.

JOHN STONE

HIBS MEN VIEWED

p18 Following on from the cover picture, Arthur Rotmil reported on the slump in attendances in German football. Commenting on the fifth anniversary of the foundation of the Bundesliga, he revealed: "The staggering figure of nearly a million fans had been 'lost' last term, as compared with the year before."

Bundesliga loses million fans

p28-29 Angelo Domenghini was the new hero of Italian football after scoring the equaliser in the 1968 European Championship Final against Yugoslavia before Italy won 2-0 in the replay. Jim Hawthorne profiled the Internazionale forward.

Established in the forefront of European forwards

Player Portrait

ANGELO DOMENGHINI

p44-45 Roger MacDonald reported on the mixed fortunes of Manchester City and their neighbours United, who were the reigning champions of England and Europe respectively, suggesting: "The Mancunian monopoly has begun to creak a little under pressure."

THIS ENGLAND by Roger Macdonald

CITY OFF THE BOIL

10 years ago Following an impressive spell at River Plate, including a goal against Boca Juniors in the *Superclasico*, France coach Raymond Domenech calls up Brittany-born Gonzalo Higuain for a friendly with Greece. Higuain, however, decides his future would be with Argentina.

20 years ago In a World Cup qualifier in Tallinn, hosts Estonia fail to turn up to play Scotland after a dispute over the floodlights. Scotland kick off and the ref abandons the game after three seconds. Scotland expect to be awarded a walkover but FIFA order a replay – which ends 0-0.

30 years ago European Cup holders Steaua Bucharest of Romania, who got a first-round bye, see the defence of their European crown end at the first attempt as they are beaten 3-1 on aggregate by Anderlecht in the second round after losing the first leg 3-0 in Belgium.

40 years ago In his first season as a coach, Roy Hodgson leads Swedish club Halmstad to the Allsvenskan title, bringing about a remarkable transformation of a club who had never won the league before and had only avoided relegation on goal difference the previous year.

50 years ago In a European Championship qualifier in Belfast, England are given a guard of honour by Northern Ireland in their first match since winning the World Cup. Alf Ramsey keeps faith with the same side that beat West Germany in July and oversees a 2-0 win.

Facetoface

CRISTIANO RONALDO

"It's been an amazing year"

The Real Madrid and Portugal star reflects on winning UEFA's Best Player in Europe award

Congratulations on winning UEFA's Best Player in Europe award. Was last year your best season ever?
Probably. In terms of trophies, I can say yes. Every year since I started to play football has been amazing, but this year was special. First of all because we won, for the first time in the history of Portugal, that important cup. For Real Madrid to win the Champions League again, it was an amazing year. I want to say thank you to my team-mates, thanks to everyone involved in the success of the national year. It's been an amazing year. I'm so happy. But I have to mention these two other amazing players [fellow nominees Gareth Bale and Antoine Griezmann] because they played amazing too.

How does winning an international competition compare to winning with a club side?
It was the first time, it's always special when you win something for the first time. I've won the Champions League three times but my dream was always to win something for Portugal, with the national team, and that's what we did. We won for the first time and the feeling is completely different. I was very emotional. I was thinking about my team-mates, my family – my whole family because we were all born in Portugal. So the feeling was a little bit crazy. I cried a lot. Sad moments, emotional moments, happy moments; it all happened in the same day. So it was unbelievable achievement, it was a special day.

During the Final against France, you were injured early on but you seemed like an assistant coach to Fernando Santos on the touchline...
Don't joke, that's my future!

But, seriously, have you ever thought about becoming a coach some day?
It's not something that I think a lot about. If you ask me right now, I don't want to be a football coach. After a few years, people might say, you have the profile to be a coach, but I don't want to, it's too complicated. Right now I just want to focus on football, this is my passion, this is what I love to do. But in the future, nobody knows, maybe in five, six, 10 years, I will change my mind and I will be an amazing coach! Let's see.

You won the most important trophies in Europe last season and now you have won the Best Player in Europe award. How do you manage to motivate yourself for this new season?
For me, every season is a challenge. Many people ask me how I'm going to motivate myself to win more things because you've won everything already. But football is my passion and I'm still able to make the fans happy. People love to see me, so I try to do my best, I try to score goals, to help my team win trophies, individually and collectively. Every year is a challenge, this year will be the same as the last 10 years. To score goals at a high level, maintain my performance, that's what I try to do.

You have won all these trophies but the World Cup is still missing. Do you think Portugal be a strong contender for the World Cup finals?
Oh come on! We've just won the European title for the first time in the history of Portugal. The World Cup? Of course it's possible. Everything in football is possible. It will be tough as we have pressure now for the next World Cup. I'm comfortable with my team-mates, our country supporting us, they are smart enough to know what Portugal can do. If you ask me if it's possible, of course it's possible, but let's enjoy the moment. It's the first time in the history of Portugal that we win the European Championship, so it's good. But, as I say many, many times, everything in football is possible, so let's be positive.

Since the group-stage format was introduced for the Champions League, it has ever been won by the same team two years in a row. Can Real Madrid change that this season?
I think so, it's possible. No one has won it twice in a row, right? If you play for Real Madrid, you have to think like that, so I think it's possible. We have a good team, we have a good coach. We have the experience of last year. We know it's a very tough competition, we need to be a little bit lucky but I'm looking forward to it. It's a good challenge. For us, Real Madrid, as a team, and I think it will be possible to this year. I'm positive that we're going to win it again.

Interview by Gavin Hamilton/ESM

Ronaldo was the winner of UEFA's Best Player in Europe award for the second time. He received 40 votes from the panel of European journalists, with eight votes for Antoine Griezmann and seven votes for Gareth Bale.

PREVIOUS WINNERS: UEFA BEST PLAYER IN EUROPE AWARD

- **2011** Lionel Messi
- **2012** Andres Iniesta
- **2013** Franck Ribery
- **2014** Cristiano Ronaldo
- **2015** Lionel Messi

• Ada Hegerberg of Lyon and Norway won the Best Women's Player in Europe award.

The fourth time this award has been presented, the 21-year-old becomes the first non-German player – after Celia Sasic (2015), Nadine Kessler (2014) and Nadine Angerer (2013) – to win the prize.

"If you ask me right now, I don't want to be a football coach"

FOOTBALL KITS

TEL: 0845 8382442
EMAIL: SALES@SUBSIDE.CO.UK
WEB: SUBSIDE.CO.UK

facebook.com/subsidesports

twitter.com/subsidesports

THE COMPLETE GUIDE TO OFFICIAL WORLDWIDE FOOTBALL PRODUCTS

NEW 16-17 MAN UTD HOME SHIRT NOW IN STOCK!

WE ONLY STOCK THE OFFICIAL PSPRO PLAYER SIZE PREMIER LEAGUE PRINTING FOR ADULT SHIRTS!

VISIT OUR WEBSITE: WWW.SUBSIDE.CO.UK
We pride ourselves in sourcing official replica, limited editions and exclusive products from around the globe.

2016-17 ICELAND SHIRTS NOW ONLY £49.99

16-17 Iceland Home, Away & 3rd Shirts Now Only £49.99 (Excl. Tax: £41.66)

Bayer Leverkusen Home Shirt 2016 2017
£59.99 JAKO

Eritrea Home Shirt 2016 2017
£49.99

Club Deportivo Palencia Home Shirt 2016 2017
£49.99 Kappa

Arsenal Away Shirt 2016 2017
£59.99 PUMA

Sampdoria Home Shirt 2016 2017
£59.99 Joma

SUBSIDE SPORTS LTD: TEL: 0845 8382442 / EMAIL: SALES@SUBSIDE.CO.UK / WEB: SUBSIDE.CO.UK

PROGRAMMES

FREE
FOOTBALL PROGRAMMES

To receive a FREE programme plus a copy of our latest catalogue (listing several thousand different mint condition Big Match, League, Scottish, Irish, Foreign and Non-League teams programmes etc.) please send your name and address to:

STEVE EARL FOOTBALL PROGRAMMES (DEPT.WS)
BROAD STREET, BUNGAY, SUFFOLK, NR351AH, ENGLAND
or phone 01986 892621 or visit www.footballprogs.co.uk
The 2016 F.A. Community Shield (Leicester v Man.Utd) £7 (inc.p&p)
(Credit/Debit Cards & PayPal accepted)

MISCELLANEOUS

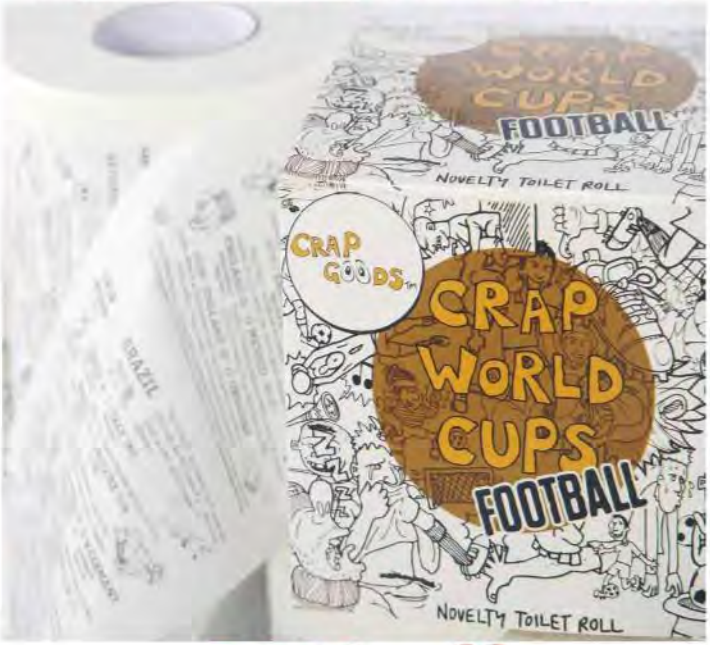
ADDING PRESTIGE TO YOUR IMAGE

Customised Ties, Embroidered Badges, Wooden Plaques, Scarves, Umbrellas, Metal Enamelware, Golf club badges & Blazers, Promotional Products

For more information call 01274 880072
email filaspun@btinternet.com
or visit www.filaspun.co.uk

MISCELLANEOUS

England's story. On a bog roll.



20% off
Use discount code WORLDSOCCER
crapgoods.com

World Service

INCORPORATING Global diary

Exclusive reports from our worldwide network of correspondents

93

MARK GLEESON
Egypt

JOHN DUERDEN
Japan

94

Out...Al Ahly (in red) exit the CAF Champions League

93

Investment...cash for J.League clubs

94

DIARY
92 Comprehensive global news

CLUB FOOTBALL
96 Results, tables, fixtures

AUGUST 4-AUGUST 31, 2016

Global diary

A comprehensive record of recent events around the world

Thursday August 4

ENGLAND: Cheikhou Kouyate scores the first goal – and then the second – at West Ham United's new London Stadium home as they beat Domzale of Slovenia 3-0 in the Europa League.
NIGERIA: Despite only arriving in Brazil six hours before kick-off, Oghenekaro Etebo scores four times as Nigeria beat Japan 5-4 in the men's Olympic tournament.

Friday August 5

BURKINA FASO: Rail Club du Kadiogo complete the domestic double, beating SONABEL 2-0 to add the Burkinabe Cup to their league title.
FIFA: An ethics committee clears FIFA president Gianni Infantino of wrongdoing following an investigation into his expenses, recruitment and alleged sacking of whistle-blowers.
ITALY: Club president Silvio Berlusconi agrees to sell his 99.93 per cent stake in Milan to a Chinese consortium, the Sino-Europe Sports Investment Management Changxing.

Saturday August 6

FRANCE: Unai Emery collects his first trophy as Paris Saint-Germain coach as they beat Lyon 4-1 in the Trophee des Champions. Hatem Ben Arfa scores with his first shot for new club PSG.
IVORY COAST: Sewe Sport win the Ivorian Cup for the first time, beating ASEC Mimosas 2-1 in the Final.
NORWAY: Christian Gytkjaer scores a 16-minute hat-trick as Rosenborg win 4-3 at Lillestrom.
SCOTLAND: Hamilton draw 1-1 away to Rangers and take their first point at Ibrox Stadium since 1937.

Sunday August 7

ENGLAND: Jose Mourinho begins his reign as Manchester United boss with a 2-1 victory over Leicester City in the Community Shield.
PORTUGAL: League champions Benfica beat cup-holders Braga in the Portuguese Super Cup.

Monday August 8

EGYPT: Zamalek win the Egypt Cup for a fourth consecutive year, beating Al Ahly 3-1 in the Final.
SAUDI ARABIA: Al Ahli beat Al Hilal on penalties to win the Saudi Super Cup in front of more than 16,000 at Craven Cottage in London.

Tuesday August 9

ENGLAND: Paul Pogba rejoins Manchester United from Juventus for a world-record €105m, which could rise to €110m. John Stones becomes the world's second-most expensive defender as he joins Manchester City from Everton for £47.5m.
ITALY: Former Ajax boss Frank De Boer is appointed Internazionale coach on a three-year deal.
NIGERIA: It is announced that Gernot Rohr will work alongside coach Salisu Yusuf as the national team's technical adviser.
SPAIN: Zinedine Zidane becomes the fifth person to win the UEFA Super Cup as a player and a coach as Real Madrid beat Sevilla 3-2 in extra time.

Wednesday August 10

CYPRUS: Apollon beat reigning league champions APOEL 2-1 in the Cypriot Super Cup.
ENGLAND: Leicester City manager Claudio Ranieri signs a new four-year contract.
GERMANY: Freiburg's Nils Petersen scores five times as Germany beat Fiji 10-0 – the biggest win in men's Olympic football since the United Arab Republic beat South Korea by the same score at Tokyo in 1964.

Thursday August 11

RUSSIA: Stanislav Cherchesov is named national coach and will guide Russia through their preparations for hosting the 2018 World Cup and the Confederations Cup in 2017.

Friday August 12

ARGENTINA: New coach Edgardo Bauza names Lionel Messi – who had announced his international retirement – in his first Argentina squad, for the World Cup qualifiers against Uruguay and Venezuela.
TURKEY: Prosecutors investigating the country's failed coup in July issue an arrest warrant for ex-international striker Hakan Sukur, who faces charges of being a member of an "armed terrorist organisation".

Saturday August 13

ENGLAND: Leicester City lose 2-1 at Hull City in the opening game of

Comeback...Metz's Opa Nguette takes on Lille

Five...Nils Petersen of Germany scores against Fiji

their Premier League defence.
FRANCE: Newly promoted Metz twice come from behind to beat Lille 3-2. Two-nil down, Caen recover to win 3-2 at home to Lorient.
TURKEY: Vitor Pereira's contract as coach of Fenerbahce is cancelled.

Sunday August 14

ENGLAND: Zlatan Ibrahimovic finds the net for Manchester United at Bournemouth to extend his record of having scored on his debut in the Champions League, Serie A, La Liga, Ligue 1 and now the Premier League.
FRANCE: Anthony Lacazette scores three times as Lyon win 3-0 at Nancy and becomes the first player to score a hat-trick in the opening round of Ligue 1 games since Valenciennes' Johan Audel, against Toulouse, in 2008.
GERMANY: Bayern beat Borussia Dortmund 2-0 to win the German Super Cup.
MOROCCO: Wydad's 2-1 win over ASEC Mimosas clinches their place – and that of Zambian club ZESCO United – in the semi-finals of the CAF Champions League.
SPAIN: Goals from Luis Suarez and Munir El Haddadi give Barcelona a 2-0 lead from the away leg of the Spanish Super Cup against Sevilla.

Monday August 15

EGYPT: Bassin Morsi scores a second-half penalty as Zamalek beat Enyimba 1-0 to reach the CAF Champions League semi-finals.
ENGLAND: Former B international Dalian Atkinson, 48, dies after being shot with a Taser by police in the early hours of the morning.
GERMANY: Borussia Dortmund's Marco Reus passes his driving ➤

EGYPT

MARK GLEESON

Stopped...Al Ahly's Amr Gamal is tackled by Ben Adama Banh of ZESCO United

Crowd ban still hurts

Ahly sell stars and miss out on Champions League semis

Egyptian stadiums used to provide such an intimidating atmosphere that the clubs' fanatical ultras had every right to consider themselves their team's fabled "12th man". Trips to Cairo's International Stadium for matches against Al Ahly and Zamalek were pilgrimages of dread for clubs from across the continent.

But for the past five years supporters have been banned and grounds across the country are now virtual mausoleums, stripping Egyptian sides of a big home advantage in continental competition and leaving the game in one of Africa's traditional footballing powers at a distinct crossroads.

The Arab Spring promised democratic change across the Middle East and gave Egyptians a heady but brief taste of freedom. Ultra groups were at the heart of the Tahrir Square demonstrations that led to the downfall of president Hosni Mubarak and the backlash from the security apparatus continues to be felt, with the clubs baring a heavy burden.

Crowds are virtually non-existent in the capital and the Cairo International Stadium is no longer in use. It is mostly just a couple of thousand well-connected supporters who get to attend these days, although every so often a limited attendance is allowed, particularly to back the national team.

With revenue from attendances having dried up, the pinch is being felt, with the added effect that the aura of invincibility that used to surround Al Ahly and Zamalek has disappeared.

With the game dipping into crisis, Ahly have had to cash in on their best players, with the most recent sales – 19-year-old Ramadan Sobhi joining Stoke City and Malik Evouna, a Gabonese international who previously played in Morocco, to Tianjin Teda of China – each bringing in £5million, which is a veritable fortune in Egyptian football.

Last four...Zamalek beat Enyimba

These days Ahly are exiled from their Cairo base and play in Alexandria on the coast, with the occasional game in Suez or El Gouna on the Red Sea. The Ultras Ahlawy group, who were credited with the momentum of the Tahrir Square movement, have used their limited opportunity in the stands to continue to mock Egypt's leaders, which reduces the chance of a stadium ban being lifted any time soon. The security establishment still fears that any new round of dissent will be fermented in the stands.

Ahly failed to make the Champions League semi-finals this year, but arch-rivals Zamalek did progress – despite going through three coaches in the space of nine months and playing home games in front of just a few hundred fans in Cairo's Petrojet Stadium. WS

CAF CHAMPIONS LEAGUE

● **SEMI-FINALS**
Zamalek (Egy) v Wydad (Mor)
ZESCO United (Zam) v Mamelodi Sundowns (SAf)
(Sep 16-18 & 23-25)

● **FINAL**
(Oct 14-16 & 21-23)

Japan

JOHN DUERDEN

J.League's $2bn windfall

Domestic game receives big investment from overseas

Envy... China's Shanghai SIPG signed Hulk for €55.8m

In terms of crowds, international profile and the performance of its clubs in the Asian Champions League, Japan's top flight may still believe it rules the roost over the Chinese Super League. But when it comes down to finances, there is only one winner.

Having splashed out around $350million on players in the January transfer window alone, Beijing has easily moved ahead of Tokyo when it comes to being first in the queue to import new foreign talent.

However, the balance could start to be redressed in Asia after the J.League announced a 10-year broadcasting-rights deal worth $2billion with UK media content company Perform Group.

Established in 1993, the J.League grew quickly thanks to the involvement of world famous stars such as Zico, Dunga, Dragan Stojkovic and Toto Schillaci. By the end of the last decade, the average attendance was around the 19,000 mark, its clubs had won two recent Asian

Help...investment will boost title-chasing Kawasaki Frontale and Yusuke Igawa (in blue)

Champions League titles, home-grown players were succeeding in Europe and the national team was increasingly respected around the world.

But while the country's football fans took great pride in seeing youngsters such as Shinji Kagawa go to Borussia Dortmund and Takashi Usami head to Bayern Munich, some believed too many players were going West too soon and it was becoming detrimental to the J.League. At the same time, the standard of imports – both coaches and players – started to slip.

And after disappointing national team performances at the 2014 World Cup and 2015 Asian Cup, and a poor recent record in the Asian Champions League, Japanese football has found itself stuck in something of a rut.

Meanwhile – helped by the arrival of stars such as Hulk, Jackson Martinez, Alex Teixeira and Ezequiel Lavezzi, and coaches Marcello Lippi and Luiz Felipe Scolari – the game is booming in China. Last year average attendances were up to 22,000 and they may even top 25,000 this season.

The J.League's new investment of $200m a year over the next decade – which was announced in July and is for online rights only – is considerably larger than the league's entire 2015 revenue of $128m. It is the biggest commercial agreement in Japanese sporting history and could help to reshape Asia's football landscape.

Investment of $200m a year over the next decade – for online rights only – is larger than the league's entire 2015 revenue of $128m

While some of the money will go towards developing infrastructure and helping to improve the matchday experience, there will also be cash available to enable clubs to buy new players and keep existing talent for longer.

While the average J.League side is unlikely to be able to match the biggest spenders in China, a few extra million will make a big difference – especially as Japanese clubs currently produce better home-grown players through their youth development systems than their rivals in China.

While South Korea's K-League is still the most successful in Asian Champions League terms, many of its clubs are struggling financially, so the battle to be Asia's number one domestic competition looks set to be intense. WS

Benefitting (left to right)... Kota Mizunuma (Tokyo), Keisuke Iwashita (Gamba Osaka), Toshihiro Aoyama (Sanfrecce Hiroshima) and Yosuke Kashiwagi (Urawa Reds)

➤ test – two years after being fined €540,000 for using a fake licence.

HOLLAND: Dick Advocaat quits his role as assistant coach of Holland's national team.

SWEDEN: Ostersund's Allsvenskan game away to Jonkoping Sodra is abandoned with the score at 1-1 when the visitors' keeper, Aly Keita, is attacked by a pitch invader.

Tuesday August 16

CROATIA: Liverpool centre-back Dejan Lovren returns to the Croatia set-up for September's World Cup qualifier against Turkey after being omitted from the Euro 2016 squad after falling out with coach Ante Cacic, amid reports he demanded guarantees over his starting place.

ENGLAND: Sergio Aguero misses two penalties in the Champions League but goes on to score a hat-trick as Manchester City beat Steaua 5-0 in Romania.

FIFA: Joao Havelange, the president of world football's governing body from 1974 to 1998, dies aged 100.

Wednesday August 17

BRAZIL: Neymar's goal after 15 seconds is the fastest in Olympic history as Brazil thrash Honduras 6-0 to reach the Final.

SPAIN: Barcelona beat Sevilla 3-0 in their home leg of the Spanish Super Cup.

Saturday August 20

BRAZIL: The hosts win Olympic gold in the men's football tournament, beating Germany on penalties after a 1-1 draw.

ITALY: Gonzalo Higuain makes his debut, as a sub, for Juventus and scores the winner in a 2-1 victory over Fiorentina.

SPAIN: Luis Suarez gets a hat-trick and Lionel Messi scores twice as Barcelona open their Liga campaign with a 6-2 victory over Real Betis.

Sunday August 21

GERMANY: Werder Bremen lose 2-1 to third-tier club Sportfreunde Lotte in the German Cup first round.

Tuesday August 23

ITALY: Daniele De Rossi and Emerson Palmieri are sent off as nine-man Roma lose 3-0 at home to Porto and fail to reach the group stage of the Champions League.

Thursday August 25

PORTUGAL: Cristiano Ronaldo is named the Best Player in Europe by UEFA for a second time, ahead of Antoine Griezmann and Gareth Bale.

UKRAINE: Darijo Srna becomes the first player to make 500 appearances for Shakhtar Donetsk as they beat Istanbul BB 2-0 in the Europa League.

Friday August 26

GERMANY: Robert Lewandowski scores a hat-trick in Carlo Ancelotti's first league game in charge as Bayern Munich thrash Werder Bremen 6-0 in the opening match of the Bundesliga season.

Saturday August 27

HOLLAND: Making the 600th league appearance of his career, Dirk Kuyt scores twice as Feyenoord beat Excelsior 4-1.

ITALY: Milan have two players sent off as they lose 4-2 away to Napoli, for whom Arkadiusz Milik marks his full debut with two goals.

NIGERIA: Samson Siasia, who led Nigeria's men's team to a bronze medal at the Rio Olympics, quits over what he describes as "a disrespectful system" and claims to have gone unpaid for five months.

Sunday August 28

FRANCE: Defending champions Paris Saint-Germain lose 3-1 at Monaco.

SCOTLAND: Nineteen-year-old winger Oliver Burke becomes the most-expensive Scottish player ever as he joins RB Leipzig from Nottingham Forest for £13m.

SERBIA: Red Star Belgrade's game at Novi Pazar is suspended for 20 minutes as home fans pelt the visitors' bench with fireworks and ripped-out seats after Red Star striker Predrag Sikimic fractures keeper Mladen Zivkovic's cheekbone with a reckless challenge.

Monday August 29

CROATIA: Real Madrid midfielder Luka Modric is named Croatia's new captain ahead of their qualifying campaign for the 2018 World Cup.

Tuesday August 30

HOLLAND: Marco Van Basten says he is leaving his assistant coaching job with the national team to take up a position with FIFA.

Wednesday August 31

ENGLAND: Premier League clubs spend more than £155m on transfer deadline day as the summer window outlay reaches a record £1.165bn.

REPUBLIC OF IRELAND: Winning his 146th and final cap, Robbie Keane is on target in Ireland's 4-0 win over Oman and draws level with Gerd Muller as Europe's fourth-highest international scorer of all time with 68 goals. WS

Club football

SOUTH AMERICA

RECOPA

(2015 Libertadores Cup winners, River Plate v 2015 Sudamericana Cup winners, Santa Fe)

1st leg

Aug18

Santa Fe (Col) 0
River Plate (Arg) 0
Ref: Sampaio (Bra)
Santa Fe: Zapata - Arboleda, Salaberry, Tesillo, Mosquera, Roa, Gordillo, Borja (Rodriguez 58), Perez (Falcon 71), Osorio (K Salazar 85), Gomez.
River Plate: Batalla - Moreira, Maidana, Mina, Casco, Ponzio, Fernandez, D'Alessandro (Mora 63), Martinez, Driussi (Andrade 63), Alario (Alonso 82).

2nd leg

Aug 25

River Plate 2 (Driussi 3, Alario 51)
Santa Fe 1 (Salaberry 65)
HT: 1-0. **Ref:** Carrillo (Per)
River Plate 2-1 on agg
River Plate: Batalla - Moreira, Maidana, Mina, Casco, Ponzio, Fernandez, D'Alessandro (Andrade 70), Martinez (Mora 80), Driussi (Alonso 70), Alario.
Santa Fe: Zapata - Arboleda, Salaberry, Tesillo, Mosquera, Roa, Pico (Falcon 60), Gordillo, Gomez, Perez (S Salazar 46), Osorio.

SUDAMERICANA CUP

1st round

1st legs - Aug 9-11; 2nd legs - Aug16-18

Aucas (Ecu) v Real Garcilaso (Per) 2-1, 0-1 (agg 2-2, Real Garcilaso on away goals); Barcelona (Ecu) v Zamora (Ven) 1-1, 1-1 (agg 2-2, Zamora 3-0 on pens); Blooming (Bol) v Plaza Colonia (Uru) 1-0, 0-1 (agg 1-1, Blooming 4-1 on pens); Deportes Tolima (Col) v Deportivo La Guaira (Ven) 0-0, 0-1 (agg 0-1); Deportivo Anzoategui (Ven) v Sport Huancayo (Per) 2-1, 0-1 (agg 2-2, Sport Huancayo on away goals); Deportivo Lara (Ven) v Junior (Col) 1-3, 1-2 (agg 2-5); Deportivo Municipal (Per) v Atletico Nacional (Col) 0-5, 0-1 (agg 0-6); Fenix (Uru) v Cerro Porteno (Par) 1-0, 0-2 (agg 1-2); Independiente Medellin (Col) v Universidad Catolica (Ecu) 1-1, 1-0 (agg 2-1); Montevideo Wanderers (Uru) v O'Higgins (Chl) 0-0, 0-0 (agg 0-0, Wanderers 5-4 on pens); Palestino (Chl) v Libertad (Par) 1-0, 3-0 (agg 4-0); Real Potosi (Bol) v Universidad Catolica (Chl) 3-1, 1-1 (agg 4-2); Sol de America (Par) v Jorge Wilstermann (Bol) 1-1, 1-1 (agg 2-2, Sol de America 5-4 on pens); Sportivo Luqueno (Par) v Penarol (Uru) 0-0, 1-1 (agg 1-1, Sportivo Luqueno on away goals); Universidad de Concepcion (Chl) v Bolivar (Bol) 2-0, 0-3 (agg 2-3); Universitario (Per) v Emelec (Ecu) 0-3, 1-3 (agg 1-6)

EUROPE

UEFA CHAMPIONS LEAGUE

3rd qualifying round

(teams marked with asterisk were direct entrants at this stage)

1st legs - Jul 26/27; 2nd legs - Aug 2/3

Ajax* (Hol) v PAOK Salonika* (Gre) 1-1, 2-1 (agg 3-2); Astana (Kaz) v Celtic (Sco) 1-1, 1-2 (agg 2-3); Astra* (Rom) v Copenhagen (Den) 1-1, 0-3 (agg 1-4); BATE Borisov (Bls) v Dundalk (Rol) 1-0, 0-3 (agg 1-3); Dinamo Zagreb (Cro) v Dinamo Tbilisi (Geo) 2-0, 1-0 (agg 3-0); Fenerbahce* (Tur) v Monaco* (Fra) 2-1, 1-3 (agg 3-4); Ludogorets (Bul) v Red Star Belgrade (Ser) 2-2, 4-2 (aet) (agg 6-4); Olympiakos* (Gre) v Hapoel Beer Sheva (Isr) 0-0, 0-1 (agg 0-1); Partizani (Alb) v Salzburg (Aut) 0-1, 0-2 (agg 0-3); Rosenborg (Nor) v APOEL Nicosia (Cyp) 2-1, 0-3 (agg 2-4); Rostov* (Rus) v Anderlecht* (Blg) 2-2, 2-0 (agg 4-2); Shakhtar Donetsk* (Ukr) v Young Boys* (Swi) 2-0, 0-2 (aet) (agg 2-2, Young Boys 4-2 on pens); Sparta Prague* (CzR) v Steaua Bucharest* (Rom) 1-1, 0-2 (agg 1-3); Trencin (Slk) v Legia Warsaw (Pol) 0-1, 0-0 (agg 0-1); Viktoria Plzen* (CzR) v Qarabag (Aze) 0-0, 1-1 (agg 1-1, Plzen on away goals)

● *Losing teams entered the Europa League in the final qualifying round*

Final qualifying round

(teams with country abbreviation were direct entrants at this stage)

1st legs - Aug16/17; 2nd legs - Aug 23/24

Ajax v Rostov 1-1, 1-4 (agg 2-5)
Celtic v Hapoel Beer Sheva 5-2, 0-2 (agg 5-4)
Copenhagen v APOEL Nicosia 1-0, 1-1 (agg 2-1)
Dinamo Zagreb v Salzburg 1-1, 2-1 (aet) (agg 3-2)
Dundalk v Legia Warsaw 0-2, 1-1 (agg 1-3)
Ludogorets v Viktoria Plzen 2-0, 2-2 (agg 4-2)
Porto (Por) v Roma (Ita) 1-1, 3-0 (agg 4-1)
Steaua Bucharest v Manchester City (Eng) 0-5, 0-1 (agg 0-6)
Villarreal (Spa) v Monaco 1-2, 0-1 (agg 1-3)
Young Boys v Monchengladbach (Ger) 1-3, 1-6 (agg 2-9)

● *Losing teams enter the Europa League at the group stage*

EUROPA LEAGUE

3rd qualifying round

(teams marked with asterisk were direct entrants at this stage)

1st legs - Jul 28; 2nd legs - Aug 3/4

Aberdeen (Sco) v Maribor (Sln) 1-1, 0-1 (agg 1-2); Admira (Aut) v Slovan Liberec* (CzR) 1-2, 0-2 (agg 1-4); AEK Larnaca (Cyp) v Spartak Moscow* (Rus) 1-1, 1-0 (agg 2-1); Austria Vienna (Aut) v Spartak Trnava (Slk) 0-1, 1-0 (aet) (agg 1-1, Austria Vienna 5-4 on pens); AZ Alkmaar* (Hol) v Giannina (Gre) 1-0, 2-1 (agg 3-1); Basaksehir* (Tur) v Rijeka* (Cro) 0-0, 2-2 (agg 2-2, Basaksehir on away goals); Birkirkara (Mlt) v Krasnodar* (Rus) 0-3, 1-3 (agg 1-6); Domzale (Sln) v West Ham United* (Eng) 2-1, 0-3 (agg 2-4); Genk (Blg) v Cork City (Rol) 1-0, 2-1 (agg 3-1); Gent* (Blg) v Viitorul* (Rom) 5-0, 0-0 (agg 5-0); Grasshopper (Swi) v Apollon* (Cyp) 2-1, 3-3 (aet) (agg 5-4); Heracles* (Hol) v Arouca* (Por) 1-1, 0-0 (agg 1-1, Arouca on away goals); Hertha Berlin* (Ger) v Brondby (Den) 1-0, 1-3 (agg 2-3); IFK Gothenburg (Swe) v HJK Helsinki (Fin) 1-2, 2-0 (agg 3-2); Jelgava (Lat) v Beitar Jerusalem (Isr) 1-1, 0-3 (agg 1-4); Lille* (Fra) v Qabala (Aze) 1-1, 0-1 (agg 1-2); Lokomotiva (Cro) v Vorskla* (Ukr) 0-0, 3-2 (agg 3-2); Lucerne* (Swi) v Sassuolo* (Ita) 1-1, 0-3 (agg 1-4); Olexandriya* (Ukr) v Hajduk Split (Cro) 0-3, 1-3 (agg 1-6); Osmanlispor (Tur) v Kalju (Est) 1-0, 2-0 (agg 3-0); Panathinaikos* (Gre) v AIK Stockholm (Swe) 1-0, 2-0 (agg 3-0); Pandurii* (Rom) v Maccabi Tel Aviv (Isr) 1-3, 1-2 (agg 2-5); Saint-Etienne* (Fra) v AEK Athens* (Gre) 0-0, 1-0 (agg 1-0); Shkendija (Mac) v Mlada Boleslav* (CzR) 2-0, 0-1 (agg 2-1); Slavia Prague (CzR) v Rio Ave* (Por) 0-0, 1-1 (agg 1-1, Slavia Prague on away goals); Torpedo Zhodino (Bls) v Rapid Vienna* (Aut) 0-0, 0-3 (agg 0-3); Videoton (Hun) v Midtjylland (Den) 0-1, 1-1 (aet) (agg 1-2); Vojvodina (Ser) v Dinamo Minsk (Bls) 1-1, 2-0 (agg 3-1); Zaglebie (Pol) v SonderjyskE (Den) 1-2, 1-1 (agg 2-3)

Final qualifying round

(the losing teams from the UEFA Champions League 3rd qualifying round entered at this stage; marked with asterisk)

1st legs - Aug18; 2nd legs - Aug 25

AEK Larnaca v Slovan Liberec 0-1, 0-3 (agg 0-4)
Arouca v Olympiakos* 0-1, 1-2 (aet) (agg 1-3)
Astana* v BATE Borisov* 2-0, 2-2 (agg 4-2)
Astra* v West Ham United 1-1, 1-0 (agg 2-1)
Austria Vienna v Rosenborg* 2-1, 2-1 (agg 4-2)
Basaksehir v Shakhtar Donetsk* 1-2, 0-2 (agg 1-4)
Beitar Jerusalem v Saint-Etienne 1-2, 0-0 (agg 1-2)
Dinamo Tbilisi* v PAOK Salonika* 0-3, 0-2 (agg 0-5)
Fenerbahce* v Grasshopper 3-0, 2-0 (agg 5-0)
Gent v Shkendija 2-1, 4-0 (agg 6-1)
IFK Gothenburg v Qarabag* 1-0, 0-3 (agg 1-3)
Krasnodar v Partizani* 4-0, 0-0 (agg 4-0)
Lokomotiva v Genk 2-2, 0-2 (agg 2-4)
Maccabi Tel Aviv v Hajduk Split 2-1, 1-2 (aet) (agg 3-3, Maccabi Tel Aviv 4-3 on pens)
Midtjylland v Osmanlispor 0-1, 0-2 (agg 0-3)
Panathinaikos v Brondby 3-0, 1-1 (agg 4-1)
Qabala v Maribor 3-1, 0-1 (agg 3-2)
Sassuolo v Red Star Belgrade* 3-0, 1-1 (agg 4-1)
Slavia Prague v Anderlecht* 0-3, 0-3 (agg 0-6)
SonderjyskE v Sparta Prague* 0-0, 2-3 (agg 2-3)
Trencin* v Rapid Vienna 0-4, 2-0 (agg 2-4)
Vojvodina v AZ Alkmaar 0-3, 0-0 (agg 0-3)

AFRICA

CAF CHAMPIONS LEAGUE

Group A

Jun 18: ASEC Abidjan (IvC) 0 Wydad Casablanca (Mor) 1; Zesco United (Zam) 3 Al Ahly (Egy) 2.
Jun 28: Al Ahly 1 ASEC Abidjan 2.
Jun 29: Wydad Casablanca 2 Zesco United 0.
Jul 16: Al Ahly 0 Wydad Casablanca 0; Zesco United 3 ASEC Abidjan 1.
Jul 27: ASEC Abidjan 1 Zesco United 1; Wydad Casablanca 0 Al Ahly 1.
Aug 12: Al Ahly 2 Zesco United 2.
Aug 14: Wydad Casablanca 2 ASEC Abidjan 1.
Aug 24: ASEC Abidjan 0 Al Ahly 0; Zesco United 1 Wydad Casablanca 1.

CAF CHAMPIONS LEAGUE – GROUP A – FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Wydad (Q)	6	3	2	1	6	3	11
Zesco (Q)	6	2	3	1	10	9	9
Al Ahly	6	1	3	2	6	7	6
ASEC	6	1	2	3	5	8	5

Group B

Jun 19: Enyimba (Nga) 0 Zamalek (Egy) 1.
Jun 29: Mamelodi Sundowns (SAf) 2 Enyimba 1.
Jul 17: Zamalek 1 Mamelodi Sundowns 2.
Jul 27: Mamelodi Sundowns 1 Zamalek 0.
Aug 15: Zamalek 1 Enyimba 0.
Aug 23: Enyimba 3 Mamelodi Sundowns 1.

CAF CHAMPIONS LEAGUE – GROUP B – FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Mamelodi (Q)	4	3	0	1	6	5	9
Zamalek (Q)	4	2	0	2	3	3	6
Enyimba	4	1	0	3	4	5	3

ES Setif (Alg) were eliminated from the competition after a pitch invasion by their fans caused the opening group game at home to Mamelodi Sundowns to be abandoned

● *The top 2 in both groups have qualified for the semi-finals*

Semi-finals draw

Zamalek v Wydad Casablanca
Zesco United v Mamelodi Sundowns
1st legs - Sep16-18; 2nd legs - Sep 23-25

CONFEDERATION CUP

Group A

Jun 19: MO Bejaia (Alg) 1 Young Africans (Tan) 0; TP Mazembe (DRC) 3 Medeama (Gha) 1.
Jun 28: Young Africans 0 TP Mazembe 1.
Jun 29: Medeama 0 MO Bejaia 0.
Jul 16: Young Africans 1 Medeama 1.
Jul 17: MO Bejaia 0 TP Mazembe 0.
Jul 26: Medeama 3 Young Africans 1.
Jul 27: TP Mazembe 1 MO Bejaia 0.
Aug 13: Young Africans 1 MO Bejaia 0.
Aug 14: Medeama 3 TP Mazembe 2.
Aug 23: MO Bejaia 1 Medeama 0; TP Mazembe 3 Young Africans 1.

CONFEDERATION CUP – GROUP A – FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Mazembe (Q)	6	4	1	1	10	5	13
MO Bejaia (Q)	6	2	2	2	2	2	8
Medeama	6	2	2	2	8	8	8
Young Africans	6	1	1	4	4	9	4

Group B

Jun 17: Kawkab Marrakech (Mor) 2 Etoile Sahel (Tun) 1.
Jun 19: FUS Rabat (Mor) 1 Al Ahli Tripoli (Lby) 0.
Jun 28: Al Ahli Tripoli 1 Kawkab Marrakech 2.
Jun 29: Etoile Sahel 1 FUS Rabat 1.
Jul 15: Kawkab Marrakech 1 FUS Rabat 3.
Jul 16: Etoile Sahel 3 Al Ahli Tripoli 0.
Jul 26: Al Ahli Tripoli 0 Etoile Sahel 1.
Jul 27: FUS Rabat 3 Kawkab Marrakech 1.
Aug 12: Al Ahli Tripoli 1 FUS Rabat 1; Etoile Sahel 3 Kawkab Marrakech 1.
Aug 23: FUS Rabat 0 Etoile Sahel 0.
Aug 24: Kawkab Marrakech 2 Al Ahli Tripoli 2.

CONFEDERATION CUP – GROUP B – FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
FUS Rabat (Q)	6	3	3	0	9	4	12
Etoile Sahel (Q)	6	3	2	1	9	4	11
Kawkab	6	2	1	3	9	13	7
Al Ahli T	6	0	2	4	4	10	2

● *The top 2 in both groups have qualified for the semi-finals*

Semi-finals draw

Etoile Sahel v TP Mazembe
MO Bejaia v FUS Rabat
1st legs - Sep16-18; 2nd legs - Sep 23-25

BOTSWANA

2015-16 Championship Decider

Aug 11: Township Rollers 5 Mochudi Centre Chiefs 1.

LIBERIA

2016 – FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Barrack YC (C)	20	15	4	1	44	12	49
Fassell	20	11	5	4	35	22	38
Nimba Utd	20	9	5	6	27	23	32
Watanga	20	7	8	5	30	22	29
LISCR	20	7	6	7	28	22	27
LPRC Oilers	20	5	9	6	18	19	24
ELWA Utd	20	6	4	10	20	29	22
Keitrace	20	5	6	9	24	33	21
M Dragons (R)	20	5	4	11	18	39	19
Anchors[1] (R)	20	4	9	7	16	24	18
Holder (R)	20	3	6	11	21	36	15

[1]3pts deducted for failing to meet club licensing standards

ASIA

BHUTAN

2016 – FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Thimphu C (C)	10	7	1	2	27	13	22
Druk United	10	6	2	2	21	14	20
Thimphu FC	10	5	0	5	24	14	15
Paro United	10	4	3	3	12	16	15
Ugyen Acad	10	4	2	4	21	12	14
B'tan Clearing	10	0	0	10	2	38	0

EAST TIMOR

2015-16 – FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
SL Benfica (C)	14	5	6	3	22	18	21
Karketu	14	5	6	3	18	14	21
Porto Taibesse	14	6	3	5	16	16	21
Academica	14	5	5	4	17	16	20
Ponta Leste	14	6	2	6	17	19	20
Carsae	14	5	4	5	17	15	19
DIT (R)	14	4	5	5	16	16	17
Aitana (R)	14	3	3	8	16	25	12

MYANMAR

2016 – FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Yadanarbon (C)	22	17	3	2	52	18	54
Yangon Utd	22	12	4	6	43	25	40
Magwe	22	11	6	5	32	23	39
Ayeyawady	22	10	7	5	40	29	37
Shan United	22	9	9	4	32	13	36
Zeyar SM	22	9	7	6	29	24	34
Hantharwady	22	8	6	8	31	32	30
Zwekapin	22	8	4	10	29	26	28
Chin United	22	6	6	10	21	37	24
Rakhine Utd	22	3	9	10	19	29	18
Southern M (R)	22	3	5	14	14	46	14
Horizon (R)	22	1	4	17	19	59	7

SYRIA

2015-16 – CHAMPIONSHIP PLAY-OFFS – FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Al Jaish[1] (C)	5	4	1	0	12	3	16
Al Wahda[1]	5	3	2	0	10	3	14
Al Ittihad[2]	5	3	0	2	4	9	11
Al Karama[2]	5	2	0	3	7	8	8
Al Shorta[3]	5	1	0	4	4	9	4
Al Muhafaza[3]	5	0	1	4	1	6	2

Bonus points were awarded for finishing position in regular-season groups – [1]3pts for1st, [2]2pts for 2nd, [3]1pt for 3rd

CONCACAF

DOMINICAN REPUBLIC

2016 Championship Final

Aug 21: Cibao 1 Barcelona Atletico 3.

Internationals

OLYMPIC FOOTBALL

Played in Brazil

MEN'S TOURNAMENT

Group A
Aug 4: Iraq 0 Denmark 0; Brazil 0 South Africa 0.
Aug 7: Denmark 1 South Africa 0; Brazil 0 Iraq 0.
Aug 10: Denmark 0 Brazil 4; South Africa 1 Iraq 1.

OLYMPIC FOOTBALL – MEN'S TNMT – GROUP A	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Brazil (Q)	3	1	2	0	4	0	5
Denmark (Q)	3	1	1	1	1	4	4
Iraq	3	0	3	0	1	1	3
South Africa	3	0	2	1	1	2	2

Group B
Aug 4: Sweden 2 Colombia 2; Nigeria 5 Japan 4.
Aug 7: Sweden 0 Nigeria 1; Japan 2 Colombia 2.
Aug 10: Japan 1 Sweden 0; Colombia 2 Nigeria 0.

OLYMPIC FOOTBALL – MEN'S TNMT – GROUP B	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Nigeria (Q)	3	2	0	1	6	6	6
Colombia (Q)	3	1	2	0	6	4	5
Japan	3	1	1	1	7	7	4
Sweden	3	0	1	2	2	4	1

Group C
Aug 4: Mexico 2 Germany 2; Fiji 0 South Korea 8.
Aug 7: Fiji 1 Mexico 5; Germany 3 South Korea 3.
Aug 10: Germany 10 Fiji 0; South Korea 1 Mexico 0.

OLYMPIC FOOTBALL – MEN'S TNMT – GROUP C	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Sth Korea (Q)	3	2	1	0	12	3	7
Germany (Q)	3	1	2	0	15	5	5
Mexico	3	1	1	1	7	4	4
Fiji	3	0	0	3	1	23	0

Group D
Aug 4: Honduras 3 Algeria 2; Portugal 2 Argentina 0.
Aug 7: Honduras 1 Portugal 2; Argentina 2 Algeria 1.
Aug 10: Algeria 1 Portugal 1; Argentina 1 Honduras 1.

OLYMPIC FOOTBALL – MEN'S TNMT – GROUP D	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Portugal (Q)	3	2	1	0	5	2	7
Honduras (Q)	3	1	1	1	5	5	4
Argentina	3	1	1	1	3	4	4
Algeria	3	0	1	2	4	6	1

● *Top 2 in each group qualified for quarter-finals*

Quarter-finals
Aug 13: Portugal 0 Germany 4; Nigeria 2 Denmark 0; South Korea 0 Honduras 1; Brazil 2 Colombia 0.

Semi-finals
Aug 17: Brazil 6 Honduras 0; Nigeria 0 Germany 2.

Bronze-medal match
Aug 20 - Belo Horizonte (Mineirao)
Honduras 2 (Lozano 71, Pereira 86)
Nigeria 3 (S Umar 34, 56, A Umar 49)
HT: 0-1. **Att:** 9,091. **Ref:** Ricci (Bra)
Honduras: Lopez - Alvarez, Pereira, Vargas, Paz, Garcia (Lozano 46), Elis, Banegas (Espinal 61), Acosta (Benavidez 62), Quioto, Salas.
Nigeria: Daniel - Shehu, Troost-Ekong, Sincere, Amuzie, Okechukwu, Usman (Erimuya 90+2), Ezekiel (Madu 80), Mikel, A Umar, S Umar (Popoola 90).

Final
Aug 20 - Rio deJaneiro (Maracana)
Brazil 1 (Neymar 27)
Germany 1 (Meyer 59)
Brazil 5-4 on pens
Aet. **HT:** 1-0. **90mins:** 1-1. **Att:** 63,707.
Ref: Faghani (Irn)
Brazil: Weverton - Zeca, Marquinhos, Rodrigo Caio, Douglas Santos, Renato Augusto, Walace, Gabriel (Felipe Anderson 70), Gabriel Jesus (Rafinha 95), Luan, Neymar.
Germany: Horn - Toljan, Ginter, Sule, Klostermann, L Bender (Promel 67), S Bender, Brandt, Meyer, Gnabry, Selke (Petersen 76).

WOMEN'S TOURNAMENT

Group E[1]
Aug 3: Sweden 1 South Africa 0; Brazil 3 China 0.
Aug 6: South Africa 0 China 2; Brazil 5 Sweden 1.
Aug 9: South Africa 0 Brazil 0; China 0 Sweden 0.

OLYMPIC FOOTBALL – WOMEN'S TNMT – GP E	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Brazil (Q)	3	2	1	0	8	1	7
China (Q)	3	1	1	1	2	3	4
Sweden (Q)	3	1	1	1	2	5	4
South Africa	3	0	1	2	0	3	1

Group F[1]
Aug 3: Canada 2 Australia 0; Zimbabwe 1 Germany 6.
Aug 6: Canada 3 Zimbabwe 1; Germany 2 Australia 2.
Aug 9: Germany 1 Canada 2; Australia 6 Zimbabwe 1.

OLYMPIC FOOTBALL – WOMEN'S TNMT – GP F	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Canada (Q)	3	3	0	0	7	2	9
Germany (Q)	3	1	1	1	9	5	4
Australia (Q)	3	1	1	1	8	5	4
Zimbabwe	3	0	0	3	3	15	0

Group G[1]
Aug 3: United States 2 New Zealand 0; France 4 Colombia 0.
Aug 6: United States 1 France 0; Colombia 0 New Zealand 1.
Aug 9: Colombia 2 United States 2; New Zealand 0 France 3.

OLYMPIC FOOTBALL – WOMEN'S TNMT – GP G	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
USA (Q)	3	2	1	0	5	2	7
France (Q)	3	2	0	1	7	1	6
New Zealand	3	1	0	2	1	5	3
Colombia	3	0	1	2	2	7	1

● *Top 2 in each group and the 2 3rd-placed countries with the best record qualified for quarter-finals*
[1] *Groups took letters E, F & G because the men's tournament groups took the letters A, B, C & D*

Quarter-finals
Aug 12: United States 1 Sweden 1 (aet, Sweden 4-3 on pens); China 0 Germany 1; Canada 1 France 0; Brazil 0 Australia 0 (aet, Brazil 7-6 on pens).

Semi-finals
Aug 16: Brazil 0 Sweden 0 (aet, Sweden 4-3 on pens); Canada 0 Germany 2.

Bronze-medal match
Aug19 - Sao Paulo (Corinthians)
Brazil 1 (Beatriz 79)
Canada 2 (Rose 25, Sinclair 52)
HT: 0-1. **Att:** 39,718. **Ref:** Albon (Rom)
Brazil: Barbara - Fabiana, Monica, Rafaelle, Tamires (Erica 63), Thaisa, Formiga, Andressa Alves (Poliana 57), Marta, Cristiane (Debinha 46), Beatriz.
Canada: Labbe - Buchanan, Zadorsky, Matheson (Schmidt 66), Belanger, Lawrence, Scott, Fleming, Rose (Chapman 59), Sinclair, Tancredi (Beckie 69).

Final
Aug19 - Rio deJaneiro (Maracana)
Sweden 1 (Blackstenius 67)
Germany 2 (Marozsan 48, Sembrant og 62)
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 52,432. **Ref:** Chenard (Can)
Sweden: Lindahl - Sembrant, Fischer, Samuelsson, Dahlkvist, Asllani (Hammarlund 68), Rubensson (Eriksson 70), Seger, Schelin, Jakobsson (Blackstenius 55), Schough.
Germany: Schult - Bartusiak, Maier, Krahn, Kemme, Behringer (Goessling 70), Dabritz (Huth 84), Leupolz, Popp, Marozsan, Mittag.

FRIENDLIES

Monday, August 8
Aug 8 - Muscat
Oman 1 (Al Muqbali pen 35)
Turkmenistan 0
HT: 1-0

Aug 8 - Doha
Qatar 2 (Tabata 38, Assadalla 50)
Iraq 1 (J Mohammed 69)
HT: 1-0

Wednesday, August 10
Aug10 - Panama City
Panama 0
Guatemala 0
Att: 2,100. **Ref:** Castro (Hnd)
Panama: Powell - Peralta (J Vargas 62), M Murillo, M Gomez (Simmons 46), Hawkins, Samudio (H Murillo 46), Batista (Gonzalez 46), Avila (Barsallo 46), Barcenas (Bonilla 55), M Vargas, Cordoba.
Guatemala: J Garcia - Payeras, R Morales, Lopez, Jimenez (Lalin 46), W Garcia (Contreras 46), Aparicio (Marquez 66), Mejia, Matta (Aragon 90), Castellanos (C Ruiz 63), Tinoco (L Martinez 70).

Saturday, August 13
Aug13 - Thimphu
Bhutan 0
India 3 (Passi 3, Lalpekhlua 18, Narzary 20)
HT: 0-3

Tuesday, August 16
Aug16 - Shah Alam, Malaysia
Iraq 0
North Korea 1 (Jong Il-gwan 20)
HT: 0-1

Thursday, August 18
Aug18 - Zurich, Switzerland
Jordan 2 (Abdelrahman pen 29, Bani Attiah 66)
Qatar 3 (Soria 15, 54, 80)
HT: 1-1

Sunday, August 21
Aug 21 - Paroi, Malaysia
Iraq 1
North Korea 1

Wednesday, August 24
Aug 24 - San Pedro Sula
Honduras 1 (Elis)
Nicaragua 0
HT: 0-0

Aug 24 - Shanghai, China
North Korea 2
United Arab Emirates 0
HT: 2-0

Aug 24 - Doha, Qatar
Saudi Arabia 4 (Al Jassim 31, Al Sahlawi 48, Awagi 67, Al Mogahwi 70)
Laos 0
HT: 1-0

Aug 24 - Tashkent
Uzbekistan 1 (Krimets 44)
Burkina Faso 0
HT: 1-0

Thursday, August 25
Aug 25 - Doha
Qatar 3 (Al Haidos pen 8, 77, Tabata 62)
Thailand 0
HT: 1-0

Saturday, August 27
Aug 27 - Khujand
Tajikistan 0
Syria 0

Sunday, August 28
Aug 28 - San Cristobal
Dominican Republic 5 (E Rodriguez 17, Fana 37, Peralta 70, 83, Espinal 75)
Puerto Rico 0
HT: 2-0

KEY TO TABLES
(C) = champions
(R) = relegated
(Q) = qualified for next stage

October 2016 Vol 57 No 1

EDITOR Gavin Hamilton
ASSISTANT EDITOR Nich Hills
DESIGN DIRECTOR Kevin Eason
DESIGN EDITOR Jamie Latchford
DEPUTY DESIGN EDITOR Daniel Franklin
PICTURE EDITOR Duncan Bond
NEWS EDITOR Jamie Rainbow
EDITORIAL SECRETARY Jacqui Mujico

PICTURES
Pictures copyright: Press Association Images, Getty Images, Action Images and Reuters

Thanks this issue to
Debbie Millett, Peter Neish

EDITORIAL
Pinehurst 2, Pinehurst Road, Farnborough Business Park, Farnborough, Hants GU14 7BF
Tel: +44 (0) 1252 555255

ADVERTISING AND SPONSORSHIP
Matthew Johnston
Tel: +44 (0) 1252 555367
E-mail: matthew.johnston@timeinc.com

MARKETING EXECUTIVE Simon Nainby
PRODUCTION MANAGER Tom Jennings
MANAGING DIRECTOR Simon Owen
GROUP MANAGING DIRECTOR Oswin Grady

International licensing enquiries
+44 (0) 20 314 85490
E-mail: bianca.hamilton-foster@timeinc.com

Time Inc.

SUBSCRIPTIONS ORDER HOTLINE
+44 (0)844 848 0848
E-mail: ipcsubs@qss-uk.com

SUBSCRIPTIONS RATES
Annual sub is for 12 months (13 issues, prices include postage) UK: £61.34 Europe/Eire (inc. VAT): 98.85 euros (airmail) USA: $144.48 (airmail) Rest of world: £99.25 (airmail)

Periodicals paid at Rahway, NJ Postmaster: send address changes to *World Soccer*, c/o MAIL America, 365 Blair Road, Avenel NJ 07001, USA. USPS004075

SUBSCRIPTIONS DEPARTMENT
Rockwood House, 9-17 Perrymount Road, Haywards Heath, West Sussex RH16 3DH, England Tel: +44 (0) 1444 475 675

WorldSoccer is a member of ESM EUROPEAN SPORTS MEDIA

● A Bola (Portugal) ● De Telegraaf (Holland)
● ElfVoetbal (Holland) ● Fanatik (Turkey)
● Frankfurter Allgemeine (Germany)
● Goal News (Greece) ● Kicker (Germany)
● Marca (Spain) ● Nemzeti Sport (Hungary)
● So Foot (France) ● Sport-Express (Russia)
● Sport/Foot (Belgium) ● TIPS Bladet (Denmark)
● World Soccer (UK)

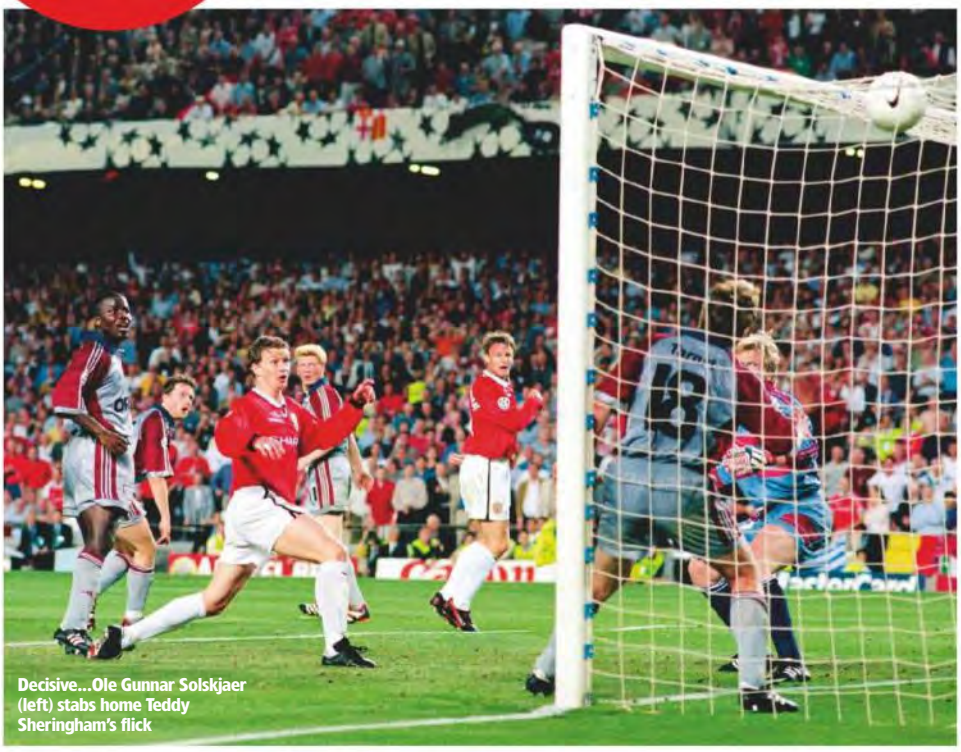
● Titan Sport (China) ● KickOff (S Africa)
● Netease (China) ● SportalKorea (S Korea)

World Soccer's GREAT MATCHES

MAY 26, 1999, BARCELONA: CHAMPIONS LEAGUE FINAL

Man United 2 Bayern 1

United substitutes pounce in the closing seconds to snatch victory from German clutches in Spain



Decisive...Ole Gunnar Solskjaer (left) stabs home Teddy Sheringham's flick

"The European Cup – under whatever name – has produced some great Finals, some thrilling Finals, some engrossing Finals down the years...but never anything as dramatic as this," began Keir Radnedge's report from Camp Nou. "Football at high level is a cousin of showbusiness, but no novelist or playwright would have dared conjure up so dramatic an ending."

With David Beckham replacing the suspended Roy Keane in central midfield, Radnedge noticed how United's "nerves jangled in defence" as Bayern took the lead through Mario Basler.

"Half-time arrived with United a puzzle," continued Radnedge. "They had wiped away the best of the rest of Europe and the Premiership by using their wide men in just that manner – wide.

"Now, Ryan Giggs on the right was continually cutting inside, as was Jesper Blomqvist on the other flank. They were playing into Bayern's hands – and feet."

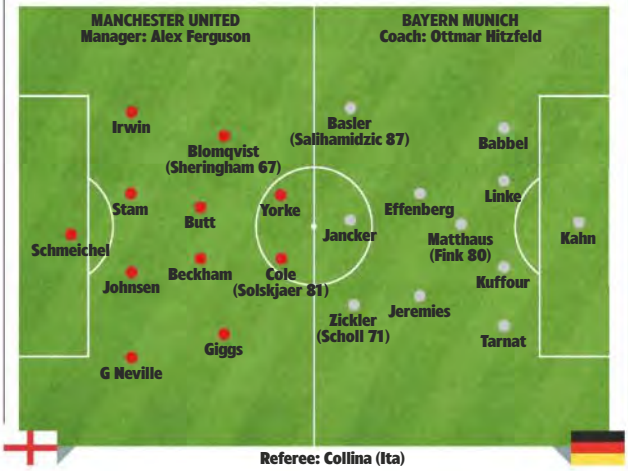
Mehmet Scholl and Carsten Jancker both hit the woodwork for Bayern in the second half, but things eventually turned in United's favour.

And as Radnedge rightly pointed out: "It was [manager Alex] Ferguson's introductions of Teddy Sheringham and Ole Gunnar Solskjaer that decided the game. 'They are goalscorers, that's what they do best,' said Ferguson later. But even he could hardly have expected they would prove his point in such startling fashion."

In the closing seconds, Sheringham pulled United level and Solskjaer stabbed home the winner in injury time.

"A golden goal would have been in demand had Bayern and United finished 90 minutes at 1-1," noted Radnedge, who added: "But then, no goals will ever be as golden as the two Sheringham and Solskjaer snatched in those dramatic minutes in Camp Nou." WS

Red alert...champions



Referee: Collina (Ita)

KEY MOMENTS

Ahead...Mario Basler puts Bayern in front

6 min Mario Basler curls the ball around the United wall and inside Peter Schmeichel's near post. **0-1**

21 min Following a corner, Dwight Yorke's goal-bound effort is pushed away by Bayern keeper Oliver Kahn.

29 min An impressive run by Lothar Matthaus from the Bayern half finds Carsten Jancker, who lays the ball off but Alexander Zickler shoots wide.

56 min Ryan Giggs crosses for Jesper Blomqvist but, under pressure from Kahn, he shoots over.

67 min Teddy Sheringham comes off the bench to replace Blomqvist.

79 min Mehmet Scholl hits a post with a clever chip after a run by Basler from his own half.

81 min Ole Gunnar Solskjaer replaces Andy Cole and immediately has a header saved by Kahn.

84 min Following a Basler corner, Jancker's overhead kick hits the crossbar.

Close..Carsten Jancker

90 min A David Beckham corner is cleared, but Giggs fires the ball back through a crowd of players and Sheringham sweeps it home. **1-1**

90+3 min Another Beckham corner is headed on by Sheringham and Solskjaer is at the back post to stab the ball into the roof of the net. **2-1**

Winner...United celebrate in injury time

NEXT MONTH ISSUE ON SALE OCTOBER 7

wyscout

Soccer Analytics Course

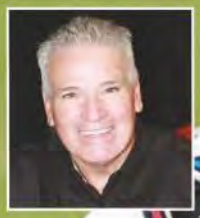
DREAMING of a CAREER in SOCCER?

Tommy Smyth
ESPN Soccer Analyst

Matt Martin
MLS Timbers
Scouting Director

Lee Fraser
Newcastle United
Technical Scout

John Print
FIFA Agent



Lynn Lashbrook
SMWW President

SPORTS MANAGEMENT WORLDWIDE

SMWW

JOIN US
London Career Conference
29 October 2016

Start or Advance Your Career in:

- Scouting
- Sports Agent
- Broadcasting
- Game Operations
- Head Coach
- Soccer Analytics
- Player Personnel
- Marketing & PR
- Management
- Front Office

8-week online interactive training courses led by experts in the English Premier League, Football League and MLS including:

- **Tommy Smyth** – ESPN Soccer Analyst
- **Matt Martin** – MLS Portland Timbers Scouting Director
- **Lee Fraser** – Newcastle United FC Technical Scout
- **John Print** – FIFA Agent
- **Dr. Lynn Lashbrook** – SMWW President

Learn the skills, strategies and techniques to advance to the front of the hiring line in soccer scouting, talent ID, soccer agency, sports marketing and pro soccer leagues including: EPL, La Liga, Serie A, Ligue 1, Bundesliga, A-League and MLS.

SMWW.com
USA: +1 503 445 7105
UK: +44 (0)20 8767 0067

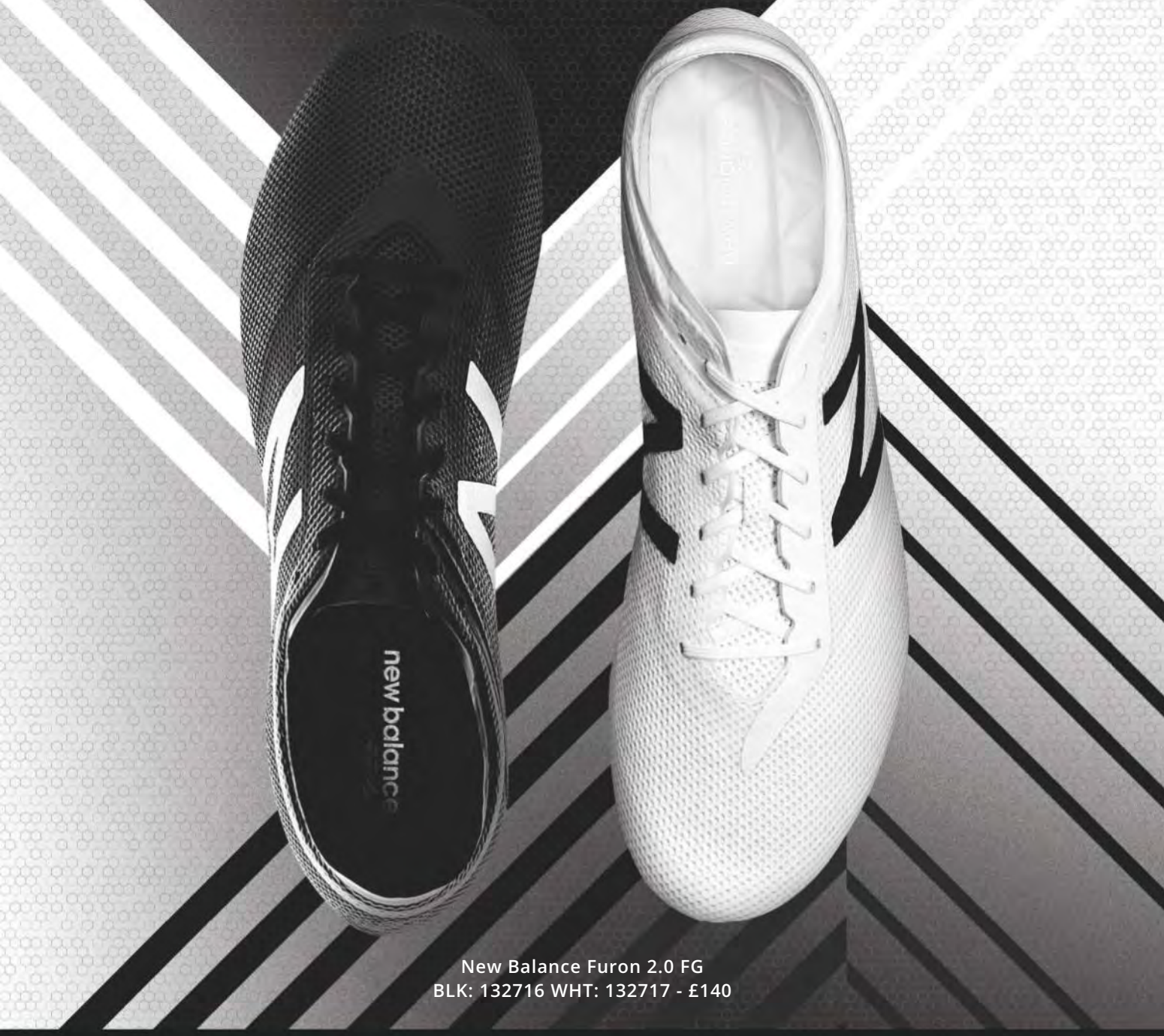
SW_9_16

PRO:DIRECT
the professional's choice

GAME OVER

new balance football

FURON



New Balance Furon 2.0 FG
BLK: 132716 WHT: 132717 - £140

WWW.PRODIRECTSOCCER.COM